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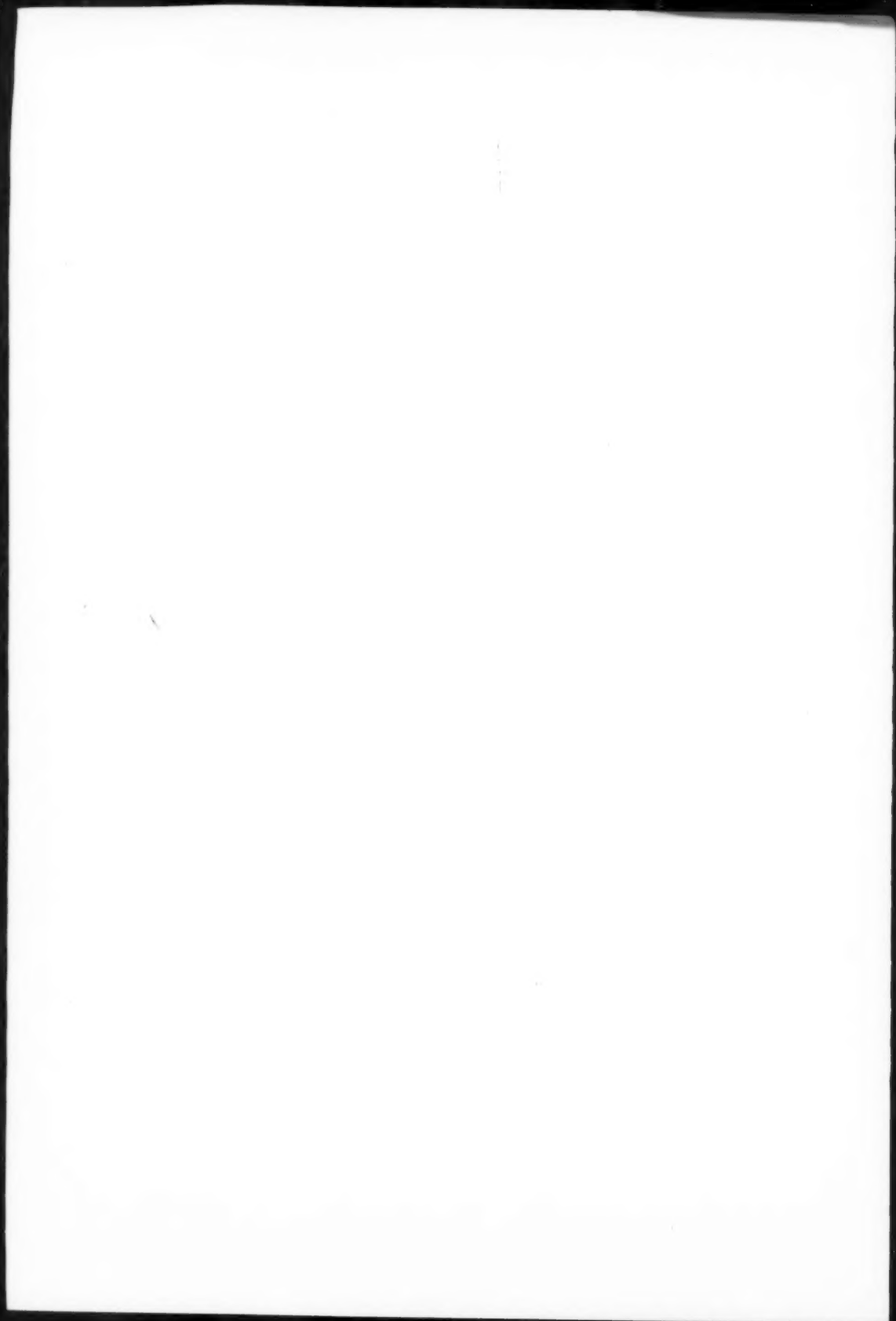


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Tragedy, Comedy, and Responsibility

The Editor's Preface

This age of mastery and violence, cruel barbarism and renewed hope, is, like the age before Plato, a time which questions responsibility. Freedom is threatened by the impact of catastrophic events, knowledge acquires external controls only to leave man helpless in mastering his own soul and destiny, and the beatnik emerges not only to show that personality disintegration is endemic and society is "sick," but also to reveal that, in the midst of doubt, rebellion, and pessimism, there is a longing for the recovery of autonomy, dignity, and responsibility. With a few exceptions — some of them major ones — this is a world similar to the world which Euripides knew.

When he wrote the *Trojan Women*, Euripides had lost all hope of Athens' victory over Sparta, and he saw only the cruelty and futility of war. A central thesis is expressed in Helen's long and sophisticated defense and reflected elsewhere throughout the play: the effort is made to shift responsibility from reason to passion. Reason should govern conduct toward piety and probity; instead, lust and revenge and fear — passion takes command, moving men to deeds of violence which end in self-destruction. It displaces calm and reasoned calculation of their own and the human community's interest. Only one bitter sweetness remains, revenge.

The spectacle of human savagery and violence as well as the sense of despair it brings is not confined to Greek tragedy. Wherever it emerges, it eclipses the notion of a real moral order. It seems to say: there are no gods; or if there are, they are utterly helpless. Life is sound and fury signifying nothing. The same pathetic lines come at the end of Euripides' tragedies:

There be many shapes to mystery.
And many things God makes to be,
Past hope or fear.
And the end men looked for cometh not,
And a path is there where no man thought.
So hath it fallen here.

Already another side of the coin is revealed. All great tragedy bears the seeds of an incorrigible optimism in the very conviction that a moral order exists. In its presence, human suffering and wrongdoing do not permanently dismay, not because wrong is somewhere righted, but because apparently futile suffering can be seen as significant and meaningful. With Euripides, not a really religious man, there is no calm of mind. There is nothing — literally nothing — to be learned from pain and grief. Life is blind struggle without purpose, goal, or direction. Neither occasional frustrations of it, nor its furtherance has meaning, and hence death is best for it brings an end to consciousness and struggle.

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But even this is not Euripides' last word. He must once have been a religious man, a man of belief, and the loss of it was painful to him. Like Matthew Arnold, he stands between two worlds, one dead, one powerless to be born. The old world of simple piety and natural religion is gone forever; yet he cannot reconcile himself (though he did reconcile some of his characters) to a world without religion, that is, to a world without man's certainty of ultimate meaning. His religious feeling is too deep for him to forego it utterly; yet he can no longer believe in the validity of the feeling he experiences. The real despair of his position is that, like Hecuba, he cries aloud to the gods without believing in them or their power!

Like Euripides, a sensitive man who is incapable of developing a callous indifference to the truth about humankind, even in the midst of today's pervasive sense of unprecedented power and man's desperation, suffers more. He experiences the sharp pain of life — his own and others' as well. He may succumb to resignation; or, he may plea in an archaic way for the old and disappearing reverence and stability of the past. "Gone is the grace that oaths once had. Through all the breadth of Hellas, honour is found no more," the chorus sings in anticipation of Thucydides' comment:

Life, life is changed and the laws of
it o'er trod . . .
Man hath forgotten God . . .

But, it is in precisely the same situation and with the same sensitivity that

truth and reality may be affirmed rather than denied.

Some would say that such an affirmation comes through both tragedy and comedy — that tragedy conduces to acceptance of the human condition and that comedy seeks an emancipation from the constrictions of finitude. Both tragedy and comedy involve the awareness of our precariousness; terror and laughter lie side by side; the same experiences of our strange pilgrimage become the stuff for both. However, one may well question whether their relation to one another must not be stated the other way about. In his article in this issue, Professor Nathan A. Scott, Jr. has shown that in a profound way comedy attempts to lead us into a special truth — the truth of our proper humanity, and hence is "a narrow escape into faith." The tragic consciousness, by contrast, is not an acceptance, a coming to terms, with the precariousness of the human condition, but a refusal to accept it and a defiant affirmation of optimism. The comic consciousness is not the implicit denial of the walls that surround us that it seems to be. It is not a flight over the walls in the transcendence of laughter, but it is instead a way of making vivid and acceptable the constriction and ambiguity of our existence. From such a standpoint the tragic is a signal of our redemption, the underside of salvation, and the comic is the capacity to affirm man in all that he is. It is the most significant, as Simone Weil says, of the "forms of the implicit love of God." Comedy points to our existence

TRAGEDY, COMEDY, AND RESPONSIBILITY

in time; tragedy bears the signal that our destiny is eternity. Both are necessary ingredients of the Christian interpretation of human existence.

But a further word must be said. Apart from joining the issue in the dialogue between the tragic and the comic with faith, there is no genuine incentive provided by either for responsibility. Resignation or laughter in thick darkness are meaningless side-effects of the main theme unless they are linked with faith. Man can merely continue in tragedy, as long as he remains man before the presence of God; or, with the discrepancies of our condition falling away, there can be the promise that the discrepancy between God and man too will fall away. Except for faith, neither the tragic nor the comic are redemptive signals, promising dignity, and offering hope. Except for faith, they provide no basis for responsibility.

Responsibility is not affirmed or acknowledged if we merely laugh at our condition or hold others, or our environment, or our heredity accountable for having gotten into such a predicament. This would be a philosophic switch to which Professor O. Hobart Mowrer recently referred by quoting Anna Russell's neat and satiric "Psychiatric Folksong:"

At three I had a feeling of ambivalence
toward my brothers;

And so it follows naturally, I poisoned
all my lovers.

But now I'm happy, I have learned
the lesson this has taught,
That everything I do that's wrong is
someone else's fault!

The great postulate of total determinism replacing that of total depravity, Professor Mowrer notes, has liberated us "only in the sense of dumping us from the frying pan into the fire." To be free, but irresponsible, is not to be free, but to be lost!

Whence, then, comes the ability to affirm responsibility? Is it merely by an act of bravado — the brave despair or courage *to be*? Is it perhaps a willingness to *look up*, even when we do not know? But this radical decision to try to live humanly in the face of our condition can be sheer nonsense, unless there is a humble readiness to accept our acceptance before God, and hence a willingness to accept others and everything that is as ethically relevant, as proper to understanding all life as being before God. Forgiveness and the grace to accept it means the recognition that there is "a path . . . where no man thought" and walking in it may be the way of recovering the view that "the fruit of responsible action in this world is grace." In this path tragedy once became victory and the last word offered to man was joy. At this point Don Quixote rides into the dawn of Easter morning.

Howard Becker 1899-1960

The world of reverent and scholarly research suffered a grievous blow in the recent death, during his year of office as President of the American Sociological Association, of Howard Becker, Professor of Sociology in the University of Wisconsin. A member of the Sociology Committee of the F. C. F. from its inception four years ago he attended every meeting from the first minute to the last one. For his ready combination of enthusiasm for our task and of shrewdness of mind in its undertaking we all owe him a debt beyond words: nothing affecting our work was ever too trivial for the attention of his intellect nor too momentous for the reception of his wit.

It is not easy to place Howard in any conventional intellectual pattern or in any easy setting of human loyalties. Of his international stature in sociology there is, of course, no question, for only his eminence as one of the world's leading theoretical sociologists overshadowed either his prowess as a teacher and writer in such diverse fields as the German Youth Movement, marriage and the family and early Cretan societies, or his standing in the world of affairs as a leading figure in the O. S. S. during World War II who subsequently aided the revival of his beloved German universities as an official of the Allied military government after hostilities had ceased.

In his allegiance to the Christian Church as an institution Howard sat loosely as, to use his own phrase, a benevolent neutral. Yet of his deep commitment to profound theological insights and all that they stood for there was not any doubt. Indeed, it was his deep awareness of and gratitude for the Calvinism of his Scottish grandmother which, coupled with his moving acceptance of an early understanding of Otto's contention that real religion is bound up with an experience of awe and wonder before the Holy, rendered it difficult for him to identify himself closely with American Protestantism. But that he was truly the Lord's servant was never in doubt. Caring little for professional disapproval he courageously inveighed both at home and abroad against what he half-humorously dubbed "the evil consequences to sociology of the ready acceptance of dogmatic atheism." So too his apt use of Biblical phrases showed how much the insights of Scripture were part of his mind and soul. Thus in his posthumous presidential address in August to the American Sociological Association he could sum up his interpretation of the history of human societies by pointing out that the pearl of great price always ends up being sullied by those who should cherish it in its purity and that the human situation is always such that whilst the lump is being leavened the salt is losing its savor. Yet with all his intellectual stature and penetrating wit he remained a lovable human being. How typical of his essential humility was his

HOWARD BECKER 1899-1960

proud boast last summer whilst doing field work in Germany that he was staying in a nunnery and had been privileged to have his own latch-key!

ARNOLD S. NASH

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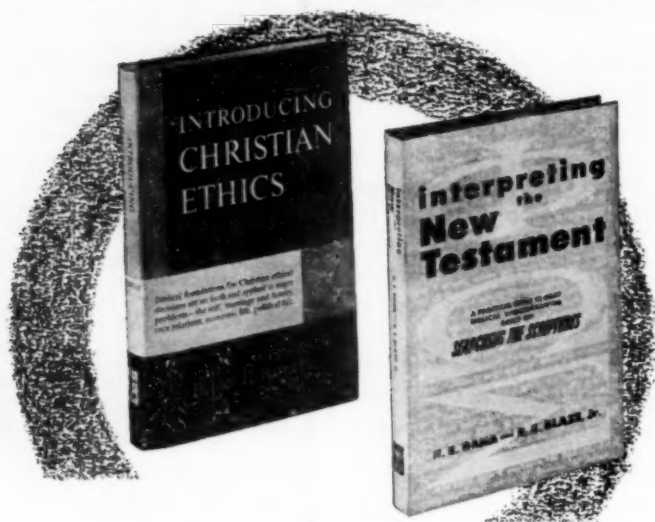
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The Bias of Comedy and the Narrow Escape into Faith

NATHAN A. SCOTT, JR.

The Name and Nature of Our Period Style

In one of his brilliant *Partisan Review* essays back in the 'forties, Clement Greenberg attempted to define "our period style" in the visual arts, the style that is fundamentally characteristic of all the painting and sculpture and decoration and design of our time and that furnishes the basic norm which underlies all the shifts and changes that have occurred in twentieth-century vision and taste. And, in a similar vein, the student of modern literature will be led to search, in this area too, for that which constitutes "our period style." What is the modality of vision and belief, or of disbelief, of affirmation or of denial, of faith or of scepticism, that furnishes the literature that we recognize to be "ours" with its essential spiritual structure? In what particular accents and stresses do we discern that special style or signature that proves itself upon our own sensibilities to be a true expression of the age? This is a major question that must face contemporary criticism whenever it attempts to move beyond the trees to get a view of the forest and of the general terrain.

And we have, I think, lived long enough with the literature of the age of Joyce and Kafka to be certain that, in so far as it proceeds from any *mal du siècle*, this is a debility that is itself rooted in that same ontological crisis which Nietzsche made a kind of scandal by his announcement in 1882 of "the death of God." It is true, of course, that ultimate explanations of this sort may, in their very ultimacy, appear to sweep the critic away from all the interesting particularities of literary actuality and into the nebulousness of the metaphysical ether. But the fact of the matter is that even the most cautious notaries in contemporary criticism are increasingly recognizing that the truly significant particularities that characterize modern literature all speak in various ways of tragic losses, and of losses ultimately rooted in the loss of God. This surely is a part of what Richard Chase must have in mind when he remarks that "the greatest writers of the first half of the twentieth century lived in a high, tense world of strenuous and difficult metaphysics . . . and religious feeling."¹

Dr. Nathan A. Scott, Jr., is Associate Professor of Theology and Literature in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. He is a member of the Editorial Board of *The Christian Scholar* and is author of *Modern Literature and the Religious Frontier* and other books.

¹Richard Chase, *The Democratic Vista* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), p. 16.

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We have, however, been recently reminded by R. W. B. Lewis that we live today under the immediate pressure not of the generation of Joyce and Kafka but of Moravia and Camus and Silone and that these are writers who have foregone the metaphysical radicalism of the classic modern generation for a quieter kind of humanism, a humanism which commits them not to the practice of the presence (or absence) of God but to the practice of the presence of man.² Now I have no doubt but that Mr. Lewis is right in contending that the *avant-garde* tradition of this century has already thus begun to periodize itself and that the dominant vision of those writers who have followed the great pioneers has this essentially anthropocentric focus. But, on the other hand, it is also to be asserted that the effort to redeem the time by sacramentalizing the relation between man and man is, by the generation of Camus and Silone, conceived to be the one remaining way of shoring up the human enterprise in this late, bad time of our abandonment. "In the sacred history of man on earth," says Silone, "it is still, alas, Good Friday." And in the greatest testament of his career Camus declared that "only two possible worlds can exist for the human mind: the sacred (or, to speak in Christian terms, the world of grace) and the world of rebellion. The disappearance of one is equivalent to the appearance of the other. . . . [And today] we live in an unsacrosanct moment in history. . . . [So] rebellion is one of the essential dimensions of man. It is our historic reality." And many similar testimonies could be drawn from the work of such writers of the present time as Samuel Beckett and Friedrich Duerrenmatt and Jean Genet and Alberto Moravia and Tennessee Williams.

So the "cosmic homelessness" and the strenuous metaphysics of the generation of Joyce and Kafka, though perhaps they assert themselves today less stridently than at an earlier time, have yet not been put aside, and their basic premise continues to be the unquestioned axiom of the modern imagination — that what we ultimately face is a Silence, an Absence, a threatening Emptiness at the center. The grime and grit and seediness that we encounter in so many of Graham Greene's novels; the glum, dispirited ennui and acedia of Moravia's Roman world; the nasty, viscous disintegration of the phenomena of daily life in Sartre's *La Nausée*; or, among younger writers even, the arid, cheerless, chromium world of Norman Mailer's *The Deer Park* and the dingy bleakness of the landscape that we sometimes meet in the fiction of Britain's "young rebels" (reminiscent of the early Orwell) and the curiously abstract violence of Kerouac's *On the Road* — these are among the characteristic and most frequently encountered qualities of recent literature. Our dominant metaphors are still metaphors of dearth and deprivation, and the world that is explored and rendered in contemporary fiction is very often, like that which is presented by the earlier literature of this century, a world that has been evacuated of radical significance. Beckett and Moravia and

²Vide R. W. B. Lewis, *The Picaresque Saint* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1959), Chapter I.

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Alain Robbe-Grillet and Natalie Sarraute and Norman Mailer are writers, in other words, who live under a spiritual dispensation that is essentially the same that is classically emblemized by such modern texts as *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* and *The Waste Land* and *The Magic Mountain* and *The Castle* and *The Sun Also Rises*. Which is to say that "our period style," despite the numerous elaborations of it that are added by each successive decade of this century, continues, in its deepest aspects, to be that which was forged by Dostoievski and Conrad and Hardy and Kafka and Hemingway, by those in whom was born the characteristically modern vision of a world with nothing at the center.

So when Melville, at a central point in *Moby Dick*, remarks that "though in many of its aspects this visible world seems formed in love, the invisible spheres were formed in fright," he seems almost, with a remarkable prescience, to be anticipating what was to become a tacit assumption in the twentieth century. For many of our writers — the Elias Canetti of *Auto da Fé*, the Malcolm Lowry of *Under the Volcano*, the Camus of *L'Étranger*, the Penn Warren of *Brother to Dragons* — have made us feel that the world for them was very nearly a kind of nightmare, and Joyce does indeed seem to have been their spokesman when he declared: "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" — or, as Henry James phrased it in his last years, "a nightmare from which there is no waking save by sleep." And it is not surprising that James should have called his last novel *The Ivory Tower*, for, when the earth has become "merely a planet in the company of planets,"³ when it is no longer "the center of divine attention,"⁴ when human thought is no longer steadied by any Incarnational principle, when Meaning and Reality are sundered, and when poetic art seems fated to be only a desperate

raid on the inarticulate
With shabby equipment always deteriorating,
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion. . . .⁵

— when this is the writer's situation, then he will indeed seek out some barely tolerable *tour d'ivoire*: or else, being given a kind of courage by his very despair, he will simply plunge into the whirling vortex of the world's disorder and make a kind of Absolute out of the sheer absurdity of existence itself. And, for all of James's greatness, it is the fact that he more nearly inclines to the former than to the latter course which establishes the distance at which he stands from what we recognize as the characteristic style and stance of the modern imagination. For,

³Erich Heller, *The Hazard of Modern Poetry* (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1953), p. 13.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁵T. S. Eliot, "East Coker," *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1943), pp. 16-17.

as Hannah Arendt has remarked in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, "to yield to the mere process of disintegration has become [for the modern intelligence] an irresistible temptation, not only because it has assumed the spurious grandeur of 'historical necessity' but also because everything outside it has begun to appear lifeless, bloodless, meaningless, and unreal."⁶ And, in the things of the imagination, it is this fascination with the Abyss which is perhaps the chief characteristic of our time.

In much of the great literature of our period, then, the world is perceived as opaque, as undependable and strange. The English critic J. Isaacs says: "The topography of Hell and its interior decoration is a very great concern of the modern dramatist and the modern novelist."⁷ And it is, indeed, in terms of the image of man amidst the dilapidation and ruins of modern existence that Hell is conceived in Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* and Eliot's *The Waste Land*, in Ford's *The Good Soldier* and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, in Faulkner's *Sanctuary* and Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*, in Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine* and Sartre's *No Exit*. Time itself even is very often experienced as a kind of captivity to what is deficient and oppressive: one might say perhaps that the soteriology of modern fiction often involves either some attempt to obliterate time in the interests of a mystical simultaneity (as in the most characteristic novels of Virginia Woolf) or some stratagem of rebellion, as in the novels of Camus. Which is to say that even in our most secularized literature there is a central core of eschatological passion or at least, as Lionel Trilling puts it, a certain "resistance to history," a "secret hope . . . that . . . man's life in history shall come to an end."⁸ What Henri-Charles Puech says of the Salvation that was envisaged in the ancient texts of primitive Gnosticism does, in fact, describe with a most startling exactness the controlling vision in many of the most representative literary expressions of the modern sensibility: it was, he says, a Salvation which "takes place in time, but the act on which it is founded is intrinsically atemporal. It is an interior and individual illumination, a revelation of oneself to oneself, a sudden, gratuitous act which is accomplished by a predestined individual and which presupposes no previous condition or preparation in time."⁹ And it is precisely such an extreme impatience as this with our life in time that lies behind those emotions of apathy and nausea, of vertigo and anguish, of terror and despair, that make up the staple

⁶Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1951), p. viii.

⁷J. Isaacs, *An Assessment of Twentieth-Century Literature* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1951), p. 59.

⁸Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination* (New York: The Viking Press, 1950), p. 195.

⁹Henri-Charles Puech, "Gnosis and Time," *Man and Time* (Papers from the *Eranos Yearbooks* for 1949 and 1951), ed. by Joseph Campbell (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), p. 76.

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in the literature that has become for the modern imagination a kind of scripture.

Nor is it at all gratuitous to recall in this context the witness of ancient Gnosticism, for here it is that we get a kind of elaboration into metaphysical system of many of the formative attitudes in the literature of our period. The disquiet, the sense of insecurity, the metaphysical radicalism that the French associate with what they call *littérature problématique* — these attitudes which we meet in the books of Hardy and Kafka and Camus and Beckett are all based, at bottom, upon a fundamental mistrust of the created orders of finitude, upon a suspicion either that they are not stout enough to withstand the invading pressures of the Abyss or that they are not reliable enough to be "a glass of vision" into ultimate reality. And it is just this breakdown and resignation of courage in the presence of the limited, concrete actualities of historical existence — it is just this that constitutes what was the essential heresy of Basilides and Valentinus and Marcion and those others who brought into being that dissident movement of the second century which we call Gnosticism. These ancient heresiarchs and *gnostikoi* postulated an absolute seclusion of that which is Radically Significant from all the provisional and proximate meanings of historical experience, and they conceived the world of finite existence to be a delusive and fraudulent imposture. Theirs, in other words, was a God unknowable by nature (*naturaliter ignotus*) and utterly incommensurable with the created order, and man's involvement in time and history was, therefore, felt by them to be a crushing burden and the ultimate disaster from which he was to be rescued. Professor Puech summarizes their sense of things in this wise:

Present life with its infinite sufferings is not true Life. Still more, time, whose instants engender and destroy one another, in which each moment arises only to be engulfed in the next moment, in which all things appear, disappear, and reappear in a twinkling, without order, without aim or cessation or end — time contains within it a rhythm of death beneath an appearance of life.¹⁰

So, far from being any kind of *paidagogia* whereby man is formed and educated by God into an adequate maturity, time itself for these *pneumatikoi* was anguish, and they understood the human situation to be one of abandonment in a treacherous and indifferent world.

Now it is this same profound scepticism about the possibility of any commerce between the two spheres of time and eternity which distinguishes our own "period style" and which makes it a variant of an ancient heresy. But, says the poet of "Burnt Norton," "Only through time time is conquered"¹¹ — by which, presumably, he means that it is only by moving deeply into the exigent realities of

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

¹¹T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton," *op. cit.*, p. 5.

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our human condition that there is any good chance of that condition being reconstituted in ways that are more promising and hopeful. And, in searching for that stratagem of the literary imagination that is most likely to assist us in "redeeming the time," it may well be that, instead of relying on some yet to be developed mutation within the terms of modern Gnosticism, we ought rather to explore the resources of another kind of radicalism altogether — namely, the radicalism of Comedy.

Aristotle on Comedy

And no sooner have we turned to the problem of comedy than we are given what may be still another measure of the imbalance of the modern mind toward the various Gnostic and proto-Gnostic forms of tragedy, for, apart from Bergson's essay on *Laughter*, there is no indispensable treatise by any modern theorist on the comic imagination. We have George Meredith's *Essay on Comedy*, which has something of the dusty status of a school classic, and, in many ways, it is a genuinely useful guide; but, in the special attention that it gives to those "volleys of silvery laughter" that will be provoked by the vanities and pretensions of men in society, it limits itself rather closely to comedy of manners. And there are also other less well known formulations of more recent date by James Feibleman and Albert Cook and Northrop Frye and Arthur Koestler. But even the recent literature of the subject has no very high interest, and it is neither rich nor various. So an approach to the subject at the present time will inevitably entail some bit of reconnoitering in order to discover a preliminary point of purchase, and it may not be, therefore, improper simply to return to the very beginning of the tradition and to inaugurate the inquiry by considering the cues that may be found in Aristotle.

It will not, of course, be forgotten that the central subject of the *Poetics* is tragedy; but it has long been thought that Aristotle also, at some time or other in the course of his career, produced a treatise on comedy, his interest in the subject being clearly attested to by several passages in the *Poetics*. And since, in the XVIIIth Chapter of Book III of the *Rhetoric*, he speaks of having already classified "Jests" in the *Poetics*, many scholars (Bywater among them), taking this to be a reference to a discussion of comedy, have even concluded that this material which does not appear in the existing *Poetics* must have made up the second part of a work of which the extant *Poetics* constituted Book I. But, however this particular issue be disposed of, judging from internal evidence within the *Poetics* itself, it would seem by no means implausible to suppose that he did produce an analysis of comedy that, in its comprehensiveness and systematic rigor, was comparable to his analysis of the forms of tragedy; and, for reasons which need not be gone into here, it also seems likely that much of his generalization in this area was based on the Old Comedy of Aristophanes.

Now the basic consistencies of the *Poetics* suggest that Aristotle regarded all

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forms of literary art as subject to the executive principle of *mimesis*, and he doubtless made as much a point of this in whatever treatise he devoted to comedy as he does in his discussion of tragedy. The poet, he insisted, imitates human beings in action, men and women who are doing something — and personages who are to be differentiated from one another in terms of their moral qualities: they are either better or worse than we are. Indeed, it is just at this point that Aristotle does explicitly distinguish in the extant *Poetics* between comedy and tragedy, for, as he says at the close of Chapter II, "Comedy aims at representing men as worse, Tragedy as better than in actual life": or, as he says more systematically at the beginning of the Vth Chapter, "Comedy is . . . an imitation of persons inferior — not, however, in the full sense of the word bad, the Ludicrous being merely a subdivision of the ugly. It consists in some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive." And this defect, presumably, consists in one or in some combination of the vices enumerated in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, such as vulgarity or buffoonery or foolhardiness.

So much, then, for the object of the comic poet's imitation, in Aristotle's probable understanding of the matter: it is an action which is ludicrous or mirthful, the action being rendered in the several media of language and rhythm and harmony. But what is the end of comedy: what function does it perform? If Aristotle's way of dealing with the problem of tragedy is at all to be taken as indicative of the way in which he wanted to deal with drama generally, it would seem that he very probably conceived it to be the function of comedy (like all the various forms of mimetic art) to conduce to a special sort of pleasure. And, in the XIth Chapter of Book I of the *Rhetoric*, he tells us what he means by "pleasure": it is, he says, "a movement by which the soul as a whole is consciously brought into its normal state of being."

Now tragedy has, of course, its distinctive way of bringing the soul into its "normal state of being" — that is, of rendering it efficient for the conduct of the affairs of life. For, since the presence in the self to any excessive degree of the emotions of pity and fear would render it incompetent, tragedy arouses these emotions in order that they may be worked off and expelled, or purged: tragic pleasure, in other words, is an affair of the *katharsis* of the tragic emotions: it is something essentially medical and therapeutic.

And, similarly, it seems reasonable to suppose, Aristotle very probably also conceived the ultimate effect of comedy to involve a special sort of pleasure, a pleasure partaking of a comic *katharsis*. Of this there is no indubitable proof, but it seems to be at least a good guess. We cannot, of course, at this point rely too heavily upon the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, and yet its testimony is significant. This document bears the name by which it is generally referred to because it is a part of the De Coislin Collection in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. It is a manuscript of the tenth century A.D. whose contents date apparently from about

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the first century B.C., and, though it is only a brief fragment, it is, apart from the *Poetics* and Plato's *Philebus*, the only other important vestige of a theory of comedy that we have coming down to us in the Greek tradition. And what is significant is that it very definitely embraces a theory of comic *katharsis*; indeed, it says: "Comedy is an imitation of an action that is ludicrous and imperfect . . . through pleasure and laughter effecting the purgation of the like emotions." Now this is patently a gloss on Aristotle; but, whether or not it truly reflects the position that he actually held, it at least seems to be a plausible guess. For Aristotle believed that comedy properly deals with the ludicrous and arouses in the spectator the sense of the ridiculous. "But," as John Crowe Ransom has observed, "this sense is analogous to pity and terror, in that it unfits a man for this duty: for there is implied in the citizen, if he goes about finding everything ridiculous, the belief that he is witnessing an irrational universe."¹² So it seems likely that Aristotle concluded that, just as there must be *katharsis* in tragedy, so too must the comic drama issue in a genuinely cathartic experience in which potentially disabling emotions are harmlessly discharged.

Here, then, are what were probably the main elements of Aristotle's conception of comedy, and, when taken all together, they amount to an exact transposition of his definition of tragedy: formally phrased, it would go like this: "Comedy, then, is an organically complete imitation of an action which is ludicrous; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; with incidents arousing pleasure and laughter, wherewith to accomplish its *katharsis* of such emotions."

The Tragic Rhythm

So now, despite the unhelpful tenuity of modern criticism, we have at last, through Aristotle, a way into our subject. And, though the conception of things that we derive from him may require a very considerable recasting, it does, if only in providing us with something to resist or to negate, enable us to begin to draw a circle of definition about the fundamental issues. And, indeed, perhaps our very first response to Aristotle ought to be a demurrer. "Comedy," he tells us, "aims at representing men as worse, Tragedy as better than in actual life." But is this really so? It is true, of course, that tragedy and comedy represent men differently, but is the difference quite of the sort which Aristotle suggests?

Let us approach the matter in this way. We may say, I think, that true tragedy has always thrust us into those acute situations of crisis in which (as Kierkegaard puts it) man's "unhappy consciousness" of the contradictions of human existence impels him to perform an act of radical self-transcendence. He is led to ask himself what it means to be a man, what it means to be rather than

¹²John Crowe Ransom, *The World's Body* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), p. 189.

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not-to-be, and how dependable is the essentially human thing in himself. And when a man thus becomes a problem to himself, it is because, in some critical moment, life, in its fundamental axiological structure, has appeared to be at cross-purposes with itself, ultimately and irremediably. What he discovers is that that which he believes to be most valid and authentic in himself is somehow radically contradicted or threatened by the objective order of things that constitutes the theatre of the human enterprise. So he begins to wonder how he can "choose" himself or if perhaps, in a universe in which man as such is fundamentally defective, his having already "chosen" himself is not the cause of his present embarrassments. But, in this "boundary-situation," the tragic man is not simply a passive agonizer: he is committed to a course of action, and this is why it is proper to refer, as we do, to the great tragedies in literature as "tragic actions," for in them the central figure is one who not only suffers but who actively resists whatever it is that would destroy his dignity and bring to naught his highest purposes. What we see, in Richard Sewall's summary of the matter, is "man at the limits of his sovereignty — Job on the ash-heap, Prometheus on the crag, Oedipus in his moment of self-discovery, Lear on the heath, Ahab on his lonely quarter-deck."¹³ And here, "with all the protective covering stripped off,"¹⁴ the hero, facing into the utter insecurity of his situation, is led to muster all his resources in one great effort to transcend the fundamental limitations of his creaturehood. It is not, in other words, as Aristotle says, that he is better than we are: it is rather that he is, as Henry Myers puts it, more of an extremist than most of us are. "To reach his goal, whatever it may be, he is always willing to sacrifice everything else, including his life. Oedipus will press the search for the unknown murderer, although he is warned of the consequences; Hamlet will prove the King's guilt and attempt to execute perfect justice, whatever the cost may be to his mother, to Laertes, to Ophelia, and to himself; Ibsen's Solness will climb the tower he has built, at the risk of falling into the quarry; Ahab will kill Moby Dick or die in the attempt."¹⁵ It is precisely with this kind of intensity that the protagonists of the great tragic actions live in the world, and it is not, therefore, surprising that they, most of them, die early and never enjoy the felicity of a long and complete life. For they soon exhaust themselves in the effort to gain release from the restrictions that are a consequence of their finitude: this is an essential part of what we are to include in the "tragic rhythm of action"¹⁶ — which is the rhythm that man's life has when it is lived at the difficult and perilous limits of the human condition.

¹³Richard B. Sewall, *The Vision of Tragedy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 5.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵Henry Alonzo Myers, *Tragedy: A View of Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 45.

¹⁶*Vide* Francis Fergusson, *The Idea of a Theatre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), Chapter I.

The Rhythm of Comedy in the Adventures of the Clown

But, now, the systole and diastole of the "comic rhythm of action" are something altogether different, and the best way of measuring the difference is to consider the personage who has always been the presiding genius of comedy — namely, the clown. And the particular clown whom I want to recall is Charlie Chaplin, whose art places him, I believe, among the few great comic geniuses of the modern period. It is not, however, the Chaplin image of the late films — of *Monsieur Verdoux*, or *Limelight*, or even of *The Great Dictator* — that I have in mind, but rather it is the Tramp of the early and middle films, of *The Kid* and *The Gold Rush* and *City Lights*: I am thinking of the little downtrodden but urbane and chivalrous man, in the big baggy trousers and the wrinkled, out-of-size shoes, with the expression of amazement and alarm written into the innocence of his face, for this is the Chaplin who has provided us with an image more memorable than anything else in the history of the cinema, of the lonely and unprotected individual clinging to his humanity amidst the horrible impersonality and dehumanization of the modern world. And this is what Charlie Chaplin's Tramp represented: he was the little man, the *homunculus*, who, amidst the dreary facelessness of men completely involved in the rituals of a money culture, insisted on behaving as though his fellow human beings were still human. And he was, of course, as a result, a scandal, an utterly absurd little scandal. But he was never regarded as a serious threat, for the society's dedication to its own materialism was so complete that it never really took the trouble to consider his eccentricity for the profoundly subversive thing it was: in film after film he was simply regarded by the sober fools with whom he collided as a charming, though utterly irrelevant, little scapegrace.

Yet, erratic and unpredictable as the Tramp's behavior was, he was never ridiculous. One wants instead to say that he was *touching*, for everything that he did was so utterly human, even his pranks and his mischief. And when one sees these old films occasionally today on the screens of little art-cinema houses, one feels that here is a man, that here is a richly particularized and wonderfully eccentric human being living out his life — a little hobo whose every gesture somehow manages to redeem the human image by revealing how beautifully mysterious it would be were it unencumbered by the mechanical reflexes which it has learned in an unpropitious time. When, in *The Kid*, he dreams that all men are angels, when he topples over the bannisters in *His Favorite Pastime*, when he shares his last sausage with a bulldog in *The Champion*, when he sets out to walk to the horizon in *The Tramp*, we feel that here is the real human thing itself — clothed not in the unearthly magnificence of tragic heroism but in the awkward innocence of essential humanity.

The film that I have particularly in mind is *City Lights*, a movie in which the

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tramp strikes up a relation with a rich man on a drunken spree who, taking a fancy to Charlie, domiciles him in his great mansion. But then, when his host recovers his sobriety, he is so repelled by the little man that he flings him out of the house. And the fun of the movie arises out of the alternations that ensue between inebriate acceptance and sober rejection and that continue to the utter bafflement of Charlie. Now, in the allegory of the film, the rich man is a representative of that bourgeois mentality which is completely captive to the materialistic ethic of "the skin game." When he is half seas over, he cannot resist the charming gaiety and insouciance of the little fellow who regards material affluence as too ephemeral and as requiring altogether too much trouble to make it worth scrambling after, and one suspects that he embraces Charlie in his drunkenness because the lackadaisical little tramp is in some way his own deeper self which he has submerged and repressed and for which he yearns. But in his moments of sobriety he rejects Charlie, expels him from his house — and, again, one suspects that he does so because the tramp, with his languid, smiling irony, engenders in him the remembrance of the fact that to be a man and to be a great material success are not one and the same thing, and this is a fact which he has not the courage to face. So he drives the clown out of his life, since Charlie evokes memories with which he has not the spiritual resources to deal.¹⁷

Now here we come upon what is perhaps the basic function of the comic man, and it is, I believe, simply to be a kind of icon of the human actuality. It is not, as Aristotle suggests, that the tragic man is *better* than we are: no, what differentiates him from the rest of us is that he is more of an extremist than most of us are; and, in the resistance that he offers against that which he feels ultimately to threaten the human enterprise, he is, as he seeks to transcend the limitations that attach to our creatureliness, always in danger of forgetting that he is not an angel and only a man. Whereas the comic man is not, as Aristotle suggests, *worse* than we are: indeed, on the contrary, it is his function simply to be an example of the contingent, imperfect, earth-bound creature that in truth we all really are, and it is also his function to awaken in us a lively recognition of what in fact our true status is. He asks us not to be afraid to acknowledge that we are only human and that our residence is not in the heavens. And he asks us to examine critically all the spurious stratagems that we employ to evade a frank acceptance of our finitude, whether they be those of bourgeois worldliness or of philosophical and religious mysticism. What the comic man cannot abide is the man who will not consent to be simply a man, who cannot tolerate the thought of himself as an incomplete and conditioned creature of a particular time and a particular space.

The great difference, in other words, between the tragic man and the comic

¹⁷Vide Parker Tyler, *Magic and Myth of the Movies* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1947), pp. 36-38.

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man is something that arises out of their different ways of dealing with the burden of human finitude. For the tragic man it is a profound embarrassment and perhaps even a curse, for he would be pure intellect or pure will or pure something-or-other, and nothing wounds him more deeply than to be reminded that his life is a conditioned thing and that there is nothing absolute at all in the human stuff out of which he is made. But the comic man is unembarrassed by even the grossest expressions of his creatureliness: though the world may not be all dandy, he has no sense of being under any cruel condemnation; nor does he have any sense of desperate entrapment within a caged prison. He can say, without ironic bitterness, "I'm only human," in full recognition of the fact that the making of this admission is itself the condition of his life being tolerable and of his being able to address to God an appropriate *Confiteor*. He does not insist upon life's conforming to his own special requirements but consents to take it on the terms of its own created actuality, and the art of comedy is devoted to an exhibition of his deep involvement in the world: so it shirks nothing — none of the irrelevant absurdities, none of the vexatious inconveniences, that are the lot of such finite creatures as ourselves.

Comedy and the "Whole Truth"

There is an incisive little essay of Aldous Huxley's called "Tragedy and the Whole Truth" that begins by recalling that famous Twelfth Book of Homer's *Odyssey*, in which Odysseus and his men, in the course of their journey back to Ithaca, encounter the monster Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis. And in this Twelfth Book, as Odysseus tells his story, he relives that dreadful day and sadly remembers the poor, hapless souls whom Scylla devoured. He sees them being lifted, struggling, into the air: he hears their screams and the despairing cries for help. He recalls how he and the other survivors could only look helplessly on the awful struggle, and he adds that it was the most pitiable sight he ever saw in all his "explorings of the passes of the sea." But, then, as Mr. Huxley reminds us, once the danger that night had been passed, Odysseus and his men went ashore to prepare their dinner on the Sicilian beach — and prepared it, as Homer says, "expertly." And the whole episode is concluded by the poet's telling us that "when they had satisfied their thirst and hunger, they thought of their dear companions and wept, and in the midst of their tears sleep came gently upon them."

Now this, Mr. Huxley tells us, is "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." "In any other poem but the *Odyssey*, what," he asks,

would the survivors have done? They would, of course, have wept, even as Homer made them weep. But would they previously have cooked their supper, and cooked it, what's more, in a masterly fashion? Would they previously have drunk and eaten to satiety? And after weeping, or actually while weeping, would they have dropped quietly off to sleep? No, they most certainly would not have done any of these things. They

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would simply have wept, lamenting their own misfortune and the horrible fate of their companions, and the canto would have ended tragically on their tears.

Homer, however, preferred to tell the Whole Truth. He knew that even the most cruelly bereaved must eat; that hunger is stronger than sorrow and that its satisfaction takes precedence even of tears. He knew that experts continue to act expertly and to find satisfaction in their accomplishment, even when friends have just been eaten, even when the accomplishment is only cooking the supper. He knew that, when the belly is full (and only when the belly is full) men can afford to grieve, and that sorrow after supper is almost a luxury. And finally he knew that, even as hunger takes precedence of grief, so fatigue, supervening, cuts short its career and drowns it in a sleep all the sweeter for bringing forgetfulness of bereavement. In a word, Homer refused to treat the theme tragically. He preferred to tell the Whole Truth.¹⁸

Now Mr. Huxley does not go on to say that the Whole Truth is the truth of comedy, but this is a line that he might very well have taken. And, indeed, if I may propose at this point another amendment of the Aristotelian formulation, I should say that the art of comedy is not an art that is dedicated to the ludicrous, but is rather an art that is dedicated to the telling of the Whole Truth: this is what it is that comedy "imitates" — not the ludicrous, but the Whole Truth. And surely Mr. Huxley is luminously right in finding Homer to be a poet of the Whole Truth, for here was one who knew that, however grief-stricken men may be by the loss of dearly beloved companions, they will remember to weep only after they have satisfied their hunger and that they will then forget their tears in slumber. The point, in other words, that the *Odyssey* is making is that men are not pure sensibility, that they also have bodies which must be fed and which, when overcome by fatigue, must relax in sleep. And this is, in a way, the point that comedy is always making, that we are not pure, disembodied essences, that indeed we are not pure anything-at-all, but that we are men and that our health and happiness are contingent upon our facing into the fact that we are finite and conditioned and therefore subject to all sorts of absurdities and interruptions and inconveniences and embarrassments — and weaknesses. This is, we might say, the courage that the comic imagination requires of us.

¹⁸Aldous Huxley, "Tragedy and the Whole Truth," in *A Book of English Essays*, selected by W. E. Williams (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1948), pp. 265-266

Antitypes of the Comic Imagination

But turn now from this poet of ancient Hellas to such a modern novelist as Virginia Woolf, and immediately we have before us a splendid example in the literature of our own time of what the comic writer is most emphatically not like.

To recall Mrs. Woolf's achievement in the novel is, of course, at some point or other in the course of one's reflections, to be put in mind of her much-quoted essay of 1919 called "Modern Fiction," for it was in this early statement that she summarized the aims to which the whole of her subsequent career as an artist was devoted. Here she was attempting to set forth the reasons for her dissatisfaction with the realism of the generation of Galsworthy and Wells and Bennett, whose books, however many of the journeyman virtues of the professional novelist they might occasionally reflect, did not, she felt, plunge beneath the merest surface of life. The spirit of this manifesto shows itself in the following passage: she says:

Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad of impressions — trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there; so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible?¹⁹

"Let us record," said Mrs. Woolf, "the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness."²⁰ And this was precisely what she undertook to do. As she said in an essay written five years later under the title *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown*, she felt that the Wellses and the Bennetts and the Galsworthys had "laid an enormous

¹⁹Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction," *The Common Reader* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1925), pp. 212-213.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 213.

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stress upon the fabric of things." They, in their old-fashioned naturalism, were preoccupied with the literalities and the surfaces of life: so she proposed that they be called "materialists." Were they, for example, travelling in the same compartment from Richmond to Waterloo with a frayed, timid, little old lady named Mrs. Brown, Wells, she suggested, in his account of the trip, "would instantly project upon the windowpane a vision of a better, breezier, jollier, happier, more adventurous and gallant world, where these musty railway carriages and fusty old women do not exist." Galsworthy, "burning with indignation, stuffed with information, arraigning civilization, . . . would only see in Mrs. Brown a pot broken on the wheel and thrown into the corner." And Bennett would proceed to make meticulously accurate notations on the appointments of the carriage and on the details of Mrs. Brown's attire and appearance — on everything, indeed, except whatever it is that constitutes Mrs. Brown's human identity. And so it was, Mrs. Woolf was contending, with the Edwardians generally: their vision was superficial: they entirely neglected Mrs. Brown. "In order to complete them," she said, "it seems necessary to do something — to join a society, or, more desperately, to write a cheque."²¹ But Mrs. Brown, she was insisting, is the proper focus and subject of literature, and had you asked her who Mrs. Brown was, she would, one imagines, have referred you back to her earlier statement of 1919 and said that Mrs. Brown is just, quite simply, "the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall."

Now this was the reality that Mrs. Woolf — like Joyce and other writers who were to follow them — wanted to get into her books. So it is no wonder that she could say, "When I write I am merely a sensibility." And thus it is also no wonder that, as one of her critics who intends to be complimentary has said, her "characters . . . are not characters," but are, "like her incidents and her intuitions . . . unfinished, spreading as the ripples of a lake spread in the sunlight."²²

Though her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, is by far exceeded in importance by some of her later books, it is, nevertheless, a good case in point and beautifully illustrates the method and the manner. The central character is Rachel Vinrace, whose twenty-four years of life in Richmond have, by her father and two maidenly aunts, been sheltered from everything that might have deepened and sophisticated her moral sensibilities. But now, on her father's boat, the *Euphrosyne*, she is going to the Villa San Gervasio in Santa Marina for a South American holiday with her uncle and aunt, Professor and Mrs. Ambrose, and Helen Ambrose intends to take her education in hand. This purpose is somewhat forwarded by the boarding of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dalloway, when the steamer drops anchor

²¹Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," in *The Hogarth Essays* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1928), p. 14.

²²Bernard Blackstone, *Virginia Woolf: A Commentary* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1949), p. 10.

in the mouth of the Tagus, for Dalloway — “a rather dull, kindly, plausible” gentleman recently a Member of Parliament — soon begins a flirtation with Rachel. But when he kisses her one stormy afternoon, amidst the lurchings of the ship, she trembles: “a chill of body and mind” creeps over her, and she is struck by the insignificance of the event. Then, at the Villa San Gervasio, she meets young Terence Hewet, who is writing a novel about “Silence, or the Things People don’t Say,” because he wants his characters to be “more abstract than people who live as we do.” After a time, the two become engaged, but nothing is to come of it, for, in a few weeks, Rachel contracts a severe headache one day after a picnic-expedition, takes to her bed with a fever, and in a short time is dead. But, in the brief period that these two young people have together, we are often in their company on afternoon strolls through the hot forests of the place, and, one day, as they are out together, they come upon two young people who are also living at the hotel, Susan Warrington and Arthur Venning: “They lay in each other’s arms and had no notion that they were observed.”

“Here’s shade,” began Hewet, when Rachel suddenly stopped dead. They saw a man and woman lying on the ground beneath them, rolling slightly this way and that as the embrace tightened and slackened. The man then sat upright and the woman, who now appeared to be Susan Warrington, lay back upon the ground, with her eyes shut and an absorbed look upon her face, as though she were not altogether conscious. Nor could you tell from her expression whether she was happy, or had suffered something. When Arthur again turned to her, butting her as a lamb butts a ewe, Hewet and Rachel retreated without a word. Hewet felt uncomfortably shy.

“I don’t like that,” said Rachel after a moment.

And Hewet says: “It’s so enormously important, you see. Their lives are now changed for ever.” To which Rachel agrees, saying that she could almost burst into tears. And Terence says, after a moment’s consideration, “Yes, there’s something horribly pathetic about it, I agree.” And on still another occasion Rachel, with an inspired breathlessness, says to Hewet: “Does it ever seem to you, Terence, that the world is composed entirely of vast blocks of matter and that we’re nothing but patches of light?” Or, again, we are told that one day “They stood together in front of the looking-glass, and with a brush tried to make themselves look as if they had been feeling nothing all the morning, neither pain nor happiness. But it chilled them to see themselves in the glass, for instead of being vast and indivisible they were really very small and separate, the size of the glass leaving a large space for the reflection of other things.”

Now this is the tone of the book, and it is not surprising that one of Mrs. Woolf’s admirers should have found it “vague and universal,” for every-

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thing is fleeting deliquescence and vague, shadowy mistiness: indeed, many of the characters themselves, amidst the hallucinatory flashes of significance that punctuate the story, are often wondering what it all comes to. And the "vagueness" and the "universality" of *The Voyage Out* were to become even more emphatically characteristic of Mrs. Woolf's performance in the later books, in *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. She was bent on dissolving the substantialities of character and event into that "luminous halo" which, in her understanding of the novelist's art, was the great thing to be striven for. And finally, as the famous "delicacy" and "sensitivity" operate on experience, we begin to feel, amidst the tenuous and fragile little epiphanies, that the hegemony of the objective world has been completely broken and that we are flapping about in a void.

Indeed, what is most impressive in Mrs. Woolf's most characteristic novels — particularly in *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves* — is the profound distaste for and the deep fear of the conditioned and limited world that is actually the scene of human life. Hers is an intelligence — and in this she is like so many of the artists of our time — which has neither the courage nor the patience to temporize with the concrete, substantial stuff that constitutes the occasion and the circumstance of man's actual career in time. It is an intelligence that cannot dive into the thick, coarse realities of the human condition, for these are not realities that are regarded as leading anywhere or as associable with what is Radically Significant in life. There is no deep faith or confidence in the realm of human finitude and in the possibility of its being "a glass of vision" into the ultimate. So an effort is made to flee into the safe and impregnable citadel of pure consciousness, and this is surely what accounts for the vulgarity that we may sometimes feel in the very refinement and delicacy and exquisiteness of sensibility that Mrs. Woolf's most ardent admirers like so much to praise. That is to say, we find vulgarity in the delicacy and the elegant sensitiveness, because it is all so bloodless and so far removed from the elemental things of human life. There is so much impatience with the clumsy grossness of the human creature and with the rough, ragged edges of life — and there is so much in the daily round of human living that Mrs. Woolf will not deign to bring within her orbit that, at last, paradoxically, we feel (as D. H. Lawrence might put it) that a kind of dirt is being done on life. She will never allow us to wallow about in the rucky mire of our humanness, and no one in her books ever howls or moans or really laughs over the human fate. And there is no passion because the characters in her novels have all been abstracted by her preciousness into fragile, gossamer-like "states of mind": it seems that only in this way could the human thing for her become just barely tolerable.

But the recoil into "sensibility" is but one of many detours away from the human actuality to be encountered in modern literature, and principal among these

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others is the recoil into "disgust" which is archetypally expressed in Jean-Paul Sartre's novel of 1938, *La Nausée*. The hero, Antoine Roquentin, is a young intellectual who takes up residence in the provincial town of Bouville-sur-Mer to finish a biography of an obscure eighteenth-century nobleman, the Marquis de Rollebon. And the novel which is written in the form of his journal is devoted to the record that he keeps of his experience during the period of his sojourn in this place. As he lives alone in his squalid roominghouse and works amidst the dreariness of the town's public library, Roquentin's spirits are soon depressed to the point of utter distraction by the drabness and monotony of life in this little coastal village, and, after a time, his restlessness making sustained scholarly labor impossible, his thinking becomes solely a matter of introspection and self-analysis. What is borne in upon him ever more deeply in the vacant, joyless days that ensue is his own isolation and the unshakeable indifference of the world to the human spirit. So intense does this vision of things become till he is stricken by first one and then another attack of sheer physical wretchedness: he is positively sickened by the amorphous factuality of the phenomenal world, by the obscene stubbornness with which things persist in retaining a *thereness* that seems to have no link with his own existence and that seems, therefore, to that extent to oppose his own inward being. Indeed, his inner exacerbation becomes so acute that even the most commonplace objects in his environment at last prove capable of throwing him into a spasm of retching or into utter gloom — a pebble on the beach, a glass of beer, his own face in a mirror, the knob of a door. The whole of existence becomes for him simply one vast, obscene, bulging pile of junk, and his fundamental sensations come to be those of nausea and disgust. It is the very arbitrariness with which events occur and things exist that fills him with distress, for it deepens his sense of the contingency and finitude of his own being. Everything seems to be fragmentary and disheveled and messy — and the obscenity of it all makes him twitch with fury.

There is only one thing that lights up the gray tedium of his days: it is to hear a gramophone record of a Negro songstress singing the jazz melody "Some of These Days." And at the end of the novel, after having given up his research and completed preparations for his departure, as he sits in a dingy little *café* listening to the song and its saxophone accompaniment for the last time, what he has really wanted all his life suddenly dawns on him: it has been, as he says, "to chase existence out of me, empty the moments of their fat, wring them out, dry them, purify myself, harden myself, so as to give out finally the clean, precise note of a saxophone."

Now it is clear that the thing that fills Roquentin with horror is simply the sheer untidiness of existence: what he is oppressed by is the messiness of things, the bedragglements of the world; and his imagination is fixed upon images of *le visqueux*, because it is the opaqueness of things that reveals to him how ultimate is the ontological discontinuity between himself as a discrete, finite creature and

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everything else that exists. Every object and every event that he experiences seem, in the sheer arbitrariness and contingency of their reality, to imply that the kind of metaphysical order that he craves is an impossibility. So his sense of justice is outraged, and, in his consuming disgust, he desires to be disembodied into the purity of sound made by a blues-saxophonist: he would live the incorporeal life of the angels, being no longer a man but a mere breath of music.

Now this deep shudder of Sartre's hero before the phenomenal world presents us with an excellent example of the response that is made to existence by the antitype of the comic man. What Antoine Roquentin reveals, in the violence of his distaste for the created order, is precisely that profound distrust of creation which the testimony of the comedian always calls into question, at least in effect, if not by intention. For his is a mind that, characteristically, wallows in the thickness and the density of the concrete world of human experience, in all of its smells and sounds and sights and tactileities. The comedian is not, characteristically, an aviator: he does not journey away from this familiar world of earth: he refuses the experiment of angelism: he will not forget that we are made out of dust, and, when his wrath is aroused, as it sometimes is, it is not because man is bound to the things of earth but rather because man sometimes foolishly supposes that he can simply fly away from them.

The Lesson of Comedy

This is, indeed, always the lesson of Comedy, that we are creatures whose nature it is to form an earthly City and who become ridiculous when we commit ourselves to some abortive venture beyond the precincts within which alone we can hope to win some proper understanding of our true human stature. It is not, of course, the purpose of the comedian to enforce a simple Sunday-School lesson: all he wants to do is to give his suffrage to the Whole Truth and, as Susanne Langer says, to "reincarnate for our perception . . . the motion and rhythm of [our] living"²³ in the world. "Real comedy," says Mrs. Langer, "sets up in the audience a sense of general exhilaration, because it presents the very image of 'livingness'"²⁴ — because, we might add, it tells us what Homer tells us in the Twelfth Book of the *Odyssey*, what Shakespeare tells us through Jack Falstaff when he takes us into Eastcheap or onto Gadshill, or what Charlie Chaplin tells us in *City Lights*. But this means, of course, that, when men decide that they are pure mind or pure will or pure sensibility, it is natural for the comic imagination to take on a critical, and even a polemical, aspect. It is appropriate, for example, that the Socrates of *The Clouds* who, in his contempt of the common world of

²³Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 344.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 348.

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human experience and in his consuming passion for the clear and distinct idea, lives ridiculously suspended in a basket high up in the air — it is appropriate that this man should, by Aristophanes, be brought down from his basket, that he should not be allowed to get away with this pretense that he lives above the relativities of history, and that he should be made to confront some of the elemental facts of life. Or, again, we feel the justice of comedy to be operative in Molière's *Le Misanthrope*, when the outrageous pharisaism of Alceste has, finally, the effect of relegating him to an essentially private universe between which and the actual world there ceases to be any connection at all. And had an Antoine Roquentin entered the orbit of so superb a modern comedian as Joyce Cary, he would have been reminded that he is not really a pure breath of music but that he is a man who eats and sleeps and defecates and catches colds in winter when he leaves off his long drawers, and that he had better remember these undignified facts if he wants to retain any dignity as a man.

The major purpose of the comedian, in other words, is to remind us of how deeply rooted we are in all the tangible things of this world, and he is not, like Shelley or the author of *To the Lighthouse*, a poet of an "unbodied joy." The motions of comedy do, to be sure, finally lead toward joy, but it is a joy that we win only after we have consented once again to journey through this familiar, actual world of earth which is our home and, in doing so, have had our faith in its stability and permanence restored. The joy of comedy is a great joy, but it is a joy which can sometimes come only after a humiliation — the humiliation that the arrogant millionaire suffers when, as he walks down the street, with his mind concentrated on his dignity and importance, he slips on the banana peeling that he failed to notice and is thus reminded that he is, after all, only a man and is as much subject to the law of gravitation as is the rest of humankind. The event may not at first bring joy to the man himself, if the capacity in him for self-transcendence has been so long unused that he cannot immediately regard with wry amusement the spectacle that he creates before the gaping schoolchildren. But, even if he is not the comic hero but rather merely the comic butt of the event, we who are also looking on grasp the meaning of what has occurred, and it brings us joy because it reminds us again how inescapable our humanity is, how established and permanent and indestructible it really is. To be sure, the man's backside is bruised as a result of the fall — yet what is really hurt in him is his pride. The truly human thing in him is not bruised: indeed, it is the lesson of comedy that this does somehow manage, again and again, to remain intact: it is true that it is often challenged, and men themselves do sometimes become ashamed of it and tamper with it and even reject it, but this stuff that is constitutive of what is human in them does, nevertheless, remain intact — and its reassertion of itself is the central moment of comedy.

This, then, is *the comic way*: it is a way that descends into the mundane, conditioned world of the human creature, moving confidently into all the diverse

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corners of man's habitation. And the difference between this way and the tragic way is not that the one leads into suffering and agony and that the other leads into rollicking mirth and jollity, for the men and women of comedy sometimes suffer too: indeed, one of the most heartrending moments in all of Shakespearean drama is that in which (*Henry IV*, part II, V, 5) Falstaff, having heard Prince Hal declare: "I know thee not, old man. . . .," turns to Justice Shallow and says: "Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound"; and, in this moment, his anguish is hardly less than that of the Lear who moans: "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is / To have a thankless child!" But the agonies of the comic protagonist never have the kind of chemical purity that belongs to the sufferings of the tragic hero: the comic man, when he becomes involved in real difficulty, is no more pure suffering than he is pure anything-else: Odysseus and his men, when they finally stumbled upon the Sicilian beach that night, first ate their supper before weeping for their lost comrades, and then, being exhausted, their tears ceased to flow, and they fell off to sleep.

So the art of comedy reminds us, however far we may venture into the strange corridors of the world or however high we may climb the treacherous mountains of the mind, that we are of the earth, earthy — that we are creatures whose finitude is ineluctable. In one of Kafka's Parables, he says:

[Man] is a free and secure citizen of the world, for he is fettered to a chain which is long enough to give him the freedom of all earthly space, and yet only so long that nothing can drag him past the frontiers of the world. But simultaneously he is a free and secure citizen of Heaven as well, for he is also fettered by a similarly designed heavenly chain. So that if he heads, say, for the earth, his heavenly collar throttles him, and if he heads for Heaven, his earthly one does the same.²⁵

And though it may be the office of tragedy to be the heavenly collar that throttles us when we head for earth, it is certainly the office of comedy to be the collar that throttles us when we make up our minds to expatriate ourselves from the conditioned realm of historical existence. For what comedy never gives up insisting upon is that we are not angels and that we belong, therefore, not to any unhistorical heaven of pure essences but to the moving, restless, dynamic world of time and space.

Now this brings me to the point of at last tentatively proposing a definition of the comic, and it will be a gloss on the definition which W. H. Auden offered a few years ago in his "Notes on the Comic," in which he said that it is "a contradiction in the relation of the individual or personal to the universal or

²⁵Franz Kafka, *Parables* (New York: Schocken Books, 1947), p. 27.

impersonal which does not involve the spectator in suffering or pity."²⁴ I should, however, prefer to put the matter a little differently and to say that the comic is a contradiction in the relation of the human individual to the created orders of existence which arises out of an over-specialization of some instinct or faculty of the self, or out of an inordinate inclination of the self in some special direction, to the neglect of the other avenues through which it ought also to gain expression. And it is this predilection of the self to identify itself too completely with some special interest or project (cf. Aristophanes' Socrates or Jonson's Volpone or Molière's Tartuffe or Sterne's Walter Shandy or Shaw's Professor Higgins) — it is this by which the self is blinded to the integral character of its humanity and thus thrown out of gear with the fundamental norms and orders of human existence. But, in the comic action, this contradiction in the individual's relation to the created orders of life "does not involve the spectator in suffering or pity," for he is not led to identify himself with the protagonist who does, indeed, become, in the course of the action, the butt of his laughter.

But, now, this definition of the comic is not yet complicated enough, for it suggests what it not quite the case — namely, that the comic protagonist is always the butt of laughter, and of laughter that is untempered with love or sympathy. This is, of course, very often the case, but it is not always the case, and it is most certainly not true of the figure who has centrally to be taken into account in any theory of comedy — namely, Sir John Falstaff. This "swoll'n parcel of dropsies," this "huge bombard of sack," this "stuff'd cloakbag of guts," is — let us admit it — a rogue and a cheat, a braggart and a sensualist. Yet he is the most lovable rogue in all of literature. He is old and fat and broken-winded, and yet there is in him a kind of fresh, prelapsarian innocence that makes us think of him always as youthful and even boyish. And like many of the boys in our own American tradition, from Mark Twain's Huck Finn to J. D. Salinger's Holden Caulfield, Falstaff is a great liar — who lies, however, like Huck and Holden, in order to protect himself against the conventional dishonesty of other men. He has moved throughout the world, has bumped into all kinds of people, suffered all sorts of hard knocks, and pinched ladies' buttocks in every corner of England: yet there is in him no fatigue, no world-weariness, and he retains a remarkable zest and enthusiasm for the human adventure. And, above all else, he has a great capacity for living intensely in the present moment: one might say that he is the original existentialist hero, if one means by "existentialist hero" not the fastidious and disgusted man of Sartre's *La Nausée* but rather the man who is *engagé*, who is intensely committed to the present moment and the present task: indeed, in this sense, Falstaff is perhaps the original prototype of the existentialist man. And this may be why he is so impatient with the restraints of conventional moral

²⁴W. H. Auden, "Notes on the Comic," *Thought*, Vol. XXVII, No. 104 (Spring, 1952), p. 57.

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codes and laws, for, however relevant they may be to the general circumstances of life, he finds them to be always ineffective and irrelevant to the immediate occasion, in all of its uniqueness and contingency. Yet, despite the outrageous improvisation in morality that it entails, it is this passionate commitment to the present moment and to the concrete reality that makes Falstaff so wonderfully and richly human.

Sir John's great scenes are, of course, in the two parts of *Henry IV* rather than in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and it is no wonder that here his role becomes finally that of victim. For these are plays whose whole drama is stirred into being by the anarchy that has overtaken the English realm; and since, in the world of Shakespearean experience, civil anarchy, of whatever sort, is most "unnatural," the drama of the two parts of *Henry IV* must, therefore, move towards the recovery of order in the body politic. Prince Hal is the one who is destined to be the agent whereby order will be restored; and since he finds in plump Jack a symbol of everything that would endanger or subvert decorum and order, he drives him off. And this is, to be sure, precisely what Falstaff does stand for: in the boldness and enterprise and vivacity and wit of this fat old rascal we have the most brilliant image that the literary tradition affords of that zest and spontaneity and independence in the human creature that would make him an intractable nuisance for every order that would define itself in such exclusively political terms as to prevent its making any room for a man to move about in and stretch himself. One might even say perhaps that his rejection by Hal is the evidence that Shakespeare provides of his human authenticity. So, despite all his faults, we have finally to face the fact that there is greatness in Sir John. He has vices, it is true, but, as Mark Van Doren says, "they have not the sound of vices. None of them is an end in itself — that is their secret. . . . He does not live to drink or steal or lie or foin o' nights. He even does not live in order that he may be the cause of wit in other men."²⁷ He simply lives for the joy of the adventure itself — and we must say, I think, to the glory of God. There is in him nothing of the protestant (and the "p" is small): he has no quarrel with life: he is not a romantic: he is engaged in no cosmic debate: he is content simply to be a man. And though he is not a very virtuous, not a very good man, though he is a rascal and a scalawag, he is a man, always and intensely human — and this, I take it, is why he is the great saint of Western comedy. We laugh at old Jack, but we also admire him and love him; and, when we laugh at him, it is simply because he is so different from the rest of us — different because he is so deeply rooted in the human condition that he restores our confidence in its resilience, in its essential stoutness and vitality. Which is simply to say that he is the archetypal instance of the comic *hero*.

²⁷Mark Van Doren, *Shakespeare* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), p. 114.

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And thus I am now brought to the point of being able to widen my definition of comedy to the extent of providing for two types of protagonist. That is to say, he may, on the one hand, like Volpone or Tartuffe or Dostoevski's "Underground" man, be one who is the target of a fundamentally unsympathetic laughter because of his deviation from the natural human norm. Or, on the other hand, like Don Quixote or Falstaff or Joyce Cary's Gulley Jimson, he may be a figure of heroic proportions whom we laugh at and yet admire. And it is the presence in a given action of the one or the other type which determines the character of the resulting *katharsis*.

The comic *katharsis* does, I think, essentially involve such a restoration of our confidence in the realm of finitude as enables us to see the daily occasions of our earth-bound career as being not irrelevant inconveniences but as possible roads into what is ultimately significant in life. But this restoration of our confidence in the conditioned realities of historical existence may be managed by the comedian in either of two ways, depending on which of the two types of comic protagonist he has placed at the center of his action. If his central personage is one whose eccentricity arises out of some wilfully maintained imbalance of character which is not of the sort that excites pity or fear, our awareness of the validity of the human norm from which he has deviated will be renewed and deepened, as he shows himself to have been rendered incompetent by this eccentricity. And I take it that the Socrates of Aristophanes' *The Clouds* is an example of this kind of comic figure. But if, on the other hand, the protagonist is, like Falstaff, a man whose eccentricity is a consequence not of his deviateness but of the very depth of his rootedness in the stuff of our common humanity, then the experience of *katharsis* is something that grows out of the joy that we take in the discovery of how stout and gamy the human thing really is. And this is, of course, the discovery that the comic *hero* enables us to make, for he is, as Mrs. Langer says,

the indomitable living creature fending for itself, tumbling and stumbling . . . from one situation into another, getting into scrape after scrape and getting out again, with or without a thrashing. He is the personified *élan vital*; his chance adventures and misadventures, without much plot, though often with bizarre complications, his absurd expectations and disappointments, in fact his whole improvised existence has the rhythm of primitive . . . life coping with a world that is forever taking new uncalculated turns, frustrating, but exciting. He is . . . now triumphant, now worsted and rueful, but in his ruefulness and dismay he is funny, because his energy is really unimpaired and each failure prepares the situation for a new fantastic move.²⁸

²⁸Susanne K. Langer, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

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This is the comic man *par excellence*, and this is the "rhythm of action" that, in its greatest moments, his life exemplifies.

The Comic Imagination and the Christian Sense of Reality

Now it seems to me that the great sympathy which the Christian imagination may feel for the testimony of the comedian is in large part a consequence of the extent to which it is governed by the same gross materialism in which comedy itself is so deeply rooted. And this is a characteristic of Christianity that, among its recent interpreters, the late Archbishop Temple most liked to remark: indeed, one of the most striking sentences in his Gifford Lectures asserts that "one ground for the hope of Christianity that it may make good its claim to be the true faith lies in the fact that it is the most avowedly materialist of all the great religions."²⁹ And I take it that, when Dr. Temple spoke of the materialistic character of Christianity, he meant that the Christian belief in the Creation and the Incarnation makes for a kind of profound respect for nature and time and history which is not easily to be found elsewhere in the history of religion. Which means that the Christian imagination is enabled to rejoice in the quiddities and heccecities of existence in a way that accords very closely with the path that is taken by the comic vision.

And that which first guarantees the Christian's confidence in the realm of the finite is his belief in the doctrine of Creation. This is not, of course, a doctrine that purports to be a scientifically accurate account of a dateable beginning of the cosmic process. It is, rather, a mytho-religious way of asserting that, though man and his world are in all respects enmeshed in relativity and contingency, they are neither illusory nor evil nor a mere concretion of some universal World Spirit. To say, as the Bible does, that God created the world out of nothing is, of course, to assert that He is the sole Ground and Source of everything that exists, and it is to assert the utter dependence of the world upon Him; but it is also, against all the various forms of Idealism and Gnosticism, to emphasize the genuine reality of finite existence: for it was *made* by God. And though this world of ours has been injured by man's sin, it is, despite its distinctness from God, *essentially* good, because it proceeds from Him and exists by His design. Nor can the doctrine of Creation be reconciled to any form of Pantheism, for in effect it denies both that the world is identical with God and that it is in some way an emanation of the "World Soul": it says that "every creature in [the world] possesses a true self which, however much perfected . . ., is never swallowed up or lost in God. Therefore, all God's creatures are images of Him in the same

²⁹William Temple, *Nature, Man and God* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934), p. 478.

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way, and to the same limited extent, as a work of art is an image of its maker — his, yet in a manner distinct from him.”³⁰

The crucial Biblical word here is a very simple word: it falls at the very beginning of the story, in the great first chapter of the Book of Genesis — “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” And upon what is implicit in this single sentence rests the whole Biblical interpretation of life and history, for that is a view of things which is fundamentally premised upon the assumption that the world of finite and contingent existence is not essentially defective simply by reason of its finiteness. Indeed, when the Christian faith has been true to itself, it has never quite forgotten that its genius in large part consists in its understanding that the finitude and particularization of created existence are not in themselves evil, since they are a part of God’s plan for the world.

There are, of course, many passages in Biblical literature that dwell upon the absoluteness of the discrepancy between the Creator and the created world. “All flesh is grass and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: . . . but the word of our God shall stand forever.” “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands: They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: . . . all nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing.” And one could go on to cite many other such passages which point to the incommensurability between the created world and its Creator. But what is significant is that this kind of testimony never has it as its purpose to suggest that the transiency and fragmentariness are in themselves evil. On the contrary: as Reinhold Niebuhr remarks at one point in his Gifford Lectures, “The fragmentary character of human life is not regarded as evil in Biblical faith because it is seen from the perspective of a centre of life and meaning in which each fragment is related to the plan of the whole, to the will of God. The evil arises when the fragment seeks by its own wisdom to comprehend the whole or attempts by its own power to realize it.”³¹

There is, in other words, in the Biblical doctrine of Creation a kind of sober realism and sanity that prompts the Hebraic imagination simply to accept the insufficiency and the incompleteness of human life as a part of God’s design. And when, in Biblical literature, the transiency and finiteness of human existence are dwelt upon, they are stressed only in contrast to and as proof of the glory and

³⁰Dorothy L. Sayers, *Further Papers on Dante* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 187.

³¹Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1943), p. 168.

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majesty of God, and there is no suggestion that this discrepancy bears any moral connotation: what is robustly affirmed, on the contrary, is that the created world is good, because it is the work of God.

The finiteness of the human condition is, of course, never minimized; our human nature remains creatural, even in the highest reaches of its freedom and self-transcendence, and we never cease to be involved in the relativities of historical existence. But always in Christian history, when the full implications of the doctrine of Creation have been understood, the Biblical insights into the essential goodness of finite existence have been preserved. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

But now perhaps even the more crucial doctrine for the Christian estimate of the essential character of finitude is the doctrine of the Incarnation — whereby it is declared that the glory of God Himself dwelt in our mortal flesh and became manifest to the eyes of men. Even the distinguished Protestant theologian Karl Barth, who is closely associated with the contemporary reaction against the "Jesus of history" movement of nineteenth-century Liberalism, insists in his *Kirchliche Dogmatik* that the central passage of the New Testament is John 1:14, "The word became flesh and dwelt among us." And the Christian community has, from time immemorial, perceived that what is of the essence of the Gospel is a divine act of Condescension to our low estate — whereby, as the Nicene Creed puts it, "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, . . . for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man. . . ." This is unquestionably the heart of the Gospel and the central miracle of Christian experience.

Now when, in its worship, the Church recites these words, its intention is to assert that, "in the fullness of time," God did really become man without ceasing to be God. It does not merely assert that, through the life of Jesus the carpenter of Galilee, we may come to discern what God is like: it says, rather, that Jesus Christ is God Himself incarnate. We have not, in other words, in Christ to do merely with a religious genius or hero of some sort: nor are we dealing, in the New Testament, with a God who, like the gods of pagan Greece, merely disguised Himself as a man. On the contrary: as Langmead Casserley so robustly puts it:

His was a real babyhood and youth, a real growth in mind and stature, a desperately human hunger, an exquisitely human pain, an agonizingly human death. In His thirty years of incarnate existence, God was touched and harrowed by all that is most menacing in the lot of man — physical pain, economic insecurity, subtle temptation, a tragic death foreseen and awaited, the frustration of noble purposes, intellectual misunderstanding, the wearisome, disillusioning absence of sympathy, slander, unpopularity, injustice, persecution, rejected love. All that most easily overcomes the spirit of man He faced without defeat, all that is

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most prone to embitter and distort the human character He absorbed without bitterness or spiritual loss, smiled kindly through the endless frustrations which so often cynicize and disillusion romantic and idealistic men, loved unwearingly through the rejection of love with a love which not even hatred could remould in its own image, confronted temptation with an invincible perfection of character and purpose against which the hitherto victorious powers of evil were powerless, and finally placed in the hands of death a life so intense and concentrated on its destiny that death's age-old mastery over life was revealed as a broken thing.³²

Now it is the Christian faith that a tremendous thing occurred in this astonishing series of events, that in the altogether unique segment of history that is constituted by our Lord's earthly career we were, in effect, "delivered from the woe of being alive."³³ And I take it that this is in part what Paul Tillich means when he speaks, as he so often does, of Christ as "the center" of history, the center round which the entire human story arranges itself. For, in the event of Jesus Christ, the whole of human existence, contaminated though it had been by the poisons of sin, was made valid and put right again, when God himself entered the sphere of our life and brought grace and truth into our very midst.

Emil Brunner is, of course, altogether right in contending, as he does in his little book *The Divine-Human Encounter*, that the ultimate significance of the Incarnation is misunderstood if it is supposed that Jesus Christ came merely to come: no, says Dr. Brunner, He "did not come merely to come, but He came to redeem. To be sure, only the Incarnate Lord — very God, very man — can be the Redeemer. But the Bible guides us to ponder less the secret of the Person of Jesus than the mystery of His work."³⁴ And I do not myself want to suggest here that the full significance of the doctrine of the Incarnation is properly construed in terms merely of the *Person* of Christ or in terms of how it illumines the true relation of the finite and the infinite. But, at the same time, I am eager to avoid the imbalance that so much of Protestant theology often represents today, of interpreting the Incarnation in such a way that, as the Lutheran theologian Joseph Sittler has noticed, it receives "only that light which can be reflected backward upon it from Calvary. While, to be sure, these events cannot be separated without the impoverishment of the majesty of the history of redemption, it is nevertheless proper to suggest," says Dr. Sittler, "that our theological tendency to declare them only in their concerted meaning *at the point of fusion* tends to

³²J. V. Langmead Casserley, *No Faith of My Own* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), pp. 35-36.

³³Denis de Rougemont, *Passion and Society*, trans. by Montgomery Belgion (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1940), p. 81.

³⁴Emil Brunner, *The Divine-Human Encounter* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943), p. 142.

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disqualify us to listen to the ontological-revelational overtones of the Incarnation."³³ And surely it is not to do violence to the true import of Biblical faith to insist that God's having condescended to "tabernacle amongst us," to assume a human body, a human mind, a human soul, and to submit Himself to all the conditions of our life in the natural order — surely it is not improper to insist that His having deigned to do this has the effect of giving a new value to all the finite vehicles and instrumentalities which He thus employed. And the consequence is that the Christian's fundamental attitude toward existence must always be profoundly affirmative: its particularity and fragmentariness can never be, for him, the offense that they are to more fastidious men: nor can he ever in any way impugn the validity of the natural and the temporal order, since for thirty years this was the home of God Himself.

Now this, then, is what I take Dr. Temple to have had in mind when he spoke of the "materialism" of Christianity — this attitude, that is, of respect, of esteem, of love even, for the actual, specific, concrete things of this world which belong to the order created by God and which formed an adequate theatre for the drama in which His Son took the leading part. The Christian imagination does not shrink, in other words, from the tangibility, from the gross concreteness, of our life in time, and it is not afraid to face the limited, conditioned nature of human existence. It is, indeed, affirmative — radically affirmative — in its attitude toward nature and time and history. It does not spend its time looking about for an elevator that will whisk it up out of the world into eternity, for it is committed to the world, and it wants the world to come to itself, not to run away from itself. It believes that God's way of dealing with us is by and through the things and creatures of this world, and that He is Himself to be met not *in* Himself but in His works and in His gifts. And it believes that in the Incarnation God Himself has affirmed the world, has affirmed the realm of finitude, the realm of nature and of history. So the religion which finds its main fulcrum in the Incarnational event is a faith which does not take us out of this world: it takes us, rather, deeper and deeper into it. Which is to say that, unlike the kind of modern imagination represented by Virginia Woolf, the Christian has no desire to be an angel, but, rather, to the scandalization of all types of idealists and angelists, it does persist in wallowing about in all the temporal, creatural stuff of human life, for it was in this stuff that God Himself became Incarnate.

Now I have been contending that it is the function of comedy to enliven our sense of the human actuality, to put us in touch with the Whole Truth — particularly when, in the pursuit of some false and abstract image of ourselves, we have become embarrassed by the limitations of our creatureliness and undertaken to bring our life in history to an end either by some violently conclusive action or by

³³Joseph Sittler, "A Theology for Earth," *The Christian Scholar*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3 (September, 1954), p. 374.

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some disillusioned flight into the realm of pure idea. Forsaking all the meretricious forms of eschatology, comedy moves toward the actual: it asks us to be content with our human limitations and possibilities and to accept our life in this world without the sentimentality either of smugness or of cynicism. And when we wish to be pure discarnate spirit or pure discarnate intellect, the comedian asks us to remember the objective, material conditions of life with which we must make our peace, if we are to retain our sanity and survive. He will not let us forget that we are men, that we are finite and conditioned creatures — not angels. And, in its deeply affirmative attitude toward the created orders of existence, in the profound "materialism" of its outlook, the comic imagination, it seems to me, summarizes an important part of the Christian testimony about the meaning of human life.

Comedy's Distillation of the Dark into Light

Indeed, it is this profoundly affirmative quality in the comic vision which makes the appreciation of it involve in our time so strenuous an effort of the moral imagination. For the kind of vision which has the most direct appeal for us is one which, in offering some radical and extremist conception of ourselves, promises to increase the psyche's temperature. The great heroes of our cultural life, as Mr. Trilling has remarked, are "the tigers of wrath"³⁶ — the Kafkas and the Sartres and the Becketts; and they are cherished as examples of a charismatic power which we covet for ourselves, of being able to endure the stigmata of our Alienation with such fierceness and valor; that the inconveniences and disadvantages of history might be left behind and the spirit liberated from the conditioned character of our mundane existence. We are, in fact, as a people always on the verge of electing to bring our life in history to an end. We

are discontented with the nature rather than with the use of the human faculty; deep in our assumption lies the hope and the belief that humanity will end its career by developing virtues which will be admirable exactly because we cannot now conceive them. The past has been a weary failure, the present cannot matter, for it is but a step forward to the final judgment; we look to the future when the best of the works of man will seem but the futile and slightly disgusting twitchings of primeval creatures. . . .³⁷

So the way of comedy which attempts to lead us into that special sort of truth which Aldous Huxley calls the "Whole Truth" — this is a way that is one of the most difficult ways which the modern imagination can be asked to take. Yet, if this way be taken, it may be a *preparatio* that will permit us once more to be

³⁶Lionel Trilling, *The Opposing Self* (New York: The Viking Press, 1955), p. 132.

³⁷Lionel Trilling, *E. M. Forster* (New York: New Directions, 1943), p. 22.

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brought to the point of being able, with both laughter and reverence in our hearts, to say with the Psalmist, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein." And this, I suspect, is a large part of what Christopher Fry means, when he tells us that "comedy is an escape, not from truth but from despair: a narrow escape into faith." It is, he suggests, the "angle of experience where the dark is distilled into light. . . . It says, in effect, that, groaning as we may be, we move in the figure of a dance, and, so moving, we trace the outline of the mystery."³⁹

Fr. William Lynch tells us that "it would be unfair to tragedy to think that it is only to the tragic that comedy is addressing itself as semantic challenger, vocabulary against vocabulary."⁴⁰ And Mr. Fry says that he is always on "the verge of saying that comedy is greater than tragedy." But, he says, "On the verge I stand and go no further."⁴¹ Nor have I wanted to put comedy into the kind of competition with tragedy that would necessitate our opting for one against the other: so to pose the issues would, of course, entail an impossibly narrow kind of scholasticism, since "we find ourselves in [comedy] or [tragedy] by the turn of a thought"⁴² and since, as Mr. Fry has reminded us, the man who is unqualified for tragedy is also unqualified for comedy. But I have wanted to suggest that comedy affords the Christian student of modern literature a high and promising ground from within literature itself for a radical critique of the various "Gnosticized" forms of tragedy that constitute "our period style." And, obversely, I have also wanted to suggest something of the kind of constructive theological insight (heretical as this may be within the forums of post-Arnoldian criticism) that the literary imagination itself, in its comic phase, proposes to the Christian intelligence — that, as Fr. Lynch puts it (and in all this he has been, as his readers will recognize, my fundamental guide):

a thing need not step out of the human to be all things, and to achieve the liberty of the children of God. The mud in man, the lowermost point in the subway, is nothing to be ashamed of. It can produce . . . the face of God. . . . To recall this, to recall this incredible relation between mud and God, is, in its own distant, adumbrating way, the function of comedy.⁴³

³⁹Christopher Fry, "Comedy," *The Tulane Drama Review*, Vol. IV, No. 3 (March, 1960), p. 77.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹William F. Lynch, S.J., *Christ and Apollo* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), p. 95.

⁴²Christopher Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

⁴³*Ibid.*

⁴⁴William F. Lynch, S.J., *op. cit.*, p. 109.

Anniversary Reflections on a Lost Cause

MORTON A. BROWN

Last December, in Texas appropriately, a man died whose one claim to fame was that he had lived to be very old. Believers in Santa Claus may assume that the last surviving veteran of the Civil War was a great American, as one politician referred to him. They may as well believe too that the cause which he claimed to have represented, the Confederacy, was a great cause. During the next few months, as the one hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the War Between the States draws on, it would be interesting, if one had the time, to watch the maneuvers of historians and publicists as they move through the war again and all around the unconfrosted issue: what good did the gallant stand of the South do? Southey's Kaspar explained to his inquiring grandchildren that Blenheim was a famous victory. "And everybody praised the Duke/ Who this great fight did win."/ "But what good came of it at last?"/ Quoth little Peterkin./ "Why, that I cannot tell," said he;/ "But 'twas a famous victory." I am wondering how to tell my little girl, who has the distinction of having been born in South Carolina, that the cause which we Southerners commemorate was a famous defeat. It would be craven to ridicule a cause just because it is a lost cause, and in an effort to avoid this trap of pragmatism I recommend a different defeat. To any who respond to the sentiment of anniversary I commend a lost cause which is worth our scrutiny, a moving issue which deserves the examination of men who call themselves thinkers, not just of pedants, armchair strategists, and reactionary elitists. I refer to the cause of the English Puritan Commonwealth, which three hundred years ago entered abruptly upon an irreparable lostness.

When I say that the Puritan cause was lost I do not suppose that I will be accused of overstatement. Neither the king nor any of his successors sent a telegram of condolence upon the death of its last survivor. Ten of its leaders were brought one by one to a scaffold in Charing Cross and there, in sight of an approving mob, each was hanged, cut down while presumably alive, disemboweled, decapitated, and then hacked into four reeking pieces which were prominently displayed "to the view and detestation of men, and to become a prey for the fowls of the air." Since death had cheated Oliver Cromwell of his share in these proceedings, the body of the great Puritan dictator was subsequently exhumed, hanged in its shroud until sunset, beheaded, and then buried in a pit beneath the gallows while the head remained fixed on a pole for several days. Nearly thirty

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years afterward, when the last of the regicides returned to England upon hearing the news that another Stuart king had been dethroned, the House of Commons, Whigs as well as Tories, resolved unanimously that King William III should issue a proclamation for Edmund Ludlow's arrest. Escaping again to the exile to which English public opinion consigned him, the aged Ludlow lived out his few remaining years on the shores of the Lake of Geneva. In coming home to England he had not fully comprehended what associations the thirtieth of January, 1649, the date of the "murder" of Charles I, had aroused in the English mind. The majority of English people had been scandalized by the events of that day, and by 1689 the restored Church had employed for a whole generation a liturgy which encouraged the uncritical to confound the Royal Martyr's sufferings with the sacrifice of Christ himself. The cause of the Puritan republic was lost to the full extent of anathema.¹

Clio, as those who know her best can testify, is primarily a tragedian, but in the midst of catastrophe she can point to the lighter side of things. The star of the Restoration began his reign with a flippant but endearing routine. As Charles II stepped from the boat on May 25, 1660, he was presented by the mayor of Dover with a Bible. Let Trevelyan tell it. "He of the thick lips declared that 'it was the thing that he loved above all things in the world'. The worthy Mayor was enchanted at so honest an answer, for he did not perceive that the comic spirit had landed on our coast." Charles brought with him from exile no planned program of revenge against the Puritans who had excluded him from the throne. He was neither vindictive nor dogmatic enough to want to make martyrs, and the few executions which took place were dictated not by the royal will but by the ferocity of public opinion. The king preferred to view as much as he could with amusement rather than alarm, and as the heyday of Puritanism could be quite funny in

¹For the sentences passed on the regicides, see Arthur Bryant, *King Charles II* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1949), pp. 124-125, and C. H. Firth, *Oliver Cromwell* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), pp. 450-452. The quotation regarding quartering is from Sir Edward Coke's explanation, given at the Gunpowder Plot trial, of the symbolic meaning of the ancient punishment for high treason. It is cited in Catherine Drinker Bowen, *The Lion and the Throne; the Life and Times of Sir Edward Coke* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957), pp. 258-259, from John Hawarde, *Les Reportes del Cases in Camera Stellata, 1593-1609*, p. 256. Macaulay describes the return and rejection of Ludlow. Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England From the Accession of James II* (New York: John W. Lovell Company, n.d.), III, 454-456. The revised liturgy of 1662 contained "A Form of Common Prayer to be used yearly upon the xxx. day of January, being the day of the Martyrdom of K. Charles the first," in which the following was repeated: "We, thy unworthy servants, humbly confess, that the sins of this Nation have been the cause which hath brought this heavy judgment upon us. . . We magnifie thy Name for that abundant grace bestowed on our late Martyred Sovereign; by which he was enabled so chearfully to follow the steps of his blessed Master and Saviour, in a constant meek suffering of all barbarous indignities, at last resisting unto blood; and even then, according to the same pattern, praying for his murderers. . ." The foregoing is printed (without pagination) in *The Book of Common Prayer as Revised and Settled at the Savoy Conference Anno 1662. 14 Charles II. Reprinted from the Sealed Book in the Tower of London* (London: William Pickering, 1844).

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retrospect he appreciated the recollection of it in the mock-heroic spoof entitled *Hudibras*. Sir Hudibras, a Presbyterian Don Quixote, had in the former years of civil fury ridden out to render blows for Dame Religion.

. . . He was of the stubborn crew
Of errant saints whom all men grant
To be the true church militant:
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun;
Decide all controversies by
Infallible artillery,
And prove their doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks;
Call fire, and sword, and desolation
A godly, thorough reformation,
Which always must be carried on
And still be doing, never done;
As if religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended.
A sect whose chief devotion lies
In odd, perverse antipathies;
In falling out with that or this,
And finding somewhat still amiss;
More peevish, cross, and splenetic
Than dog distract or monkey sick;
That with more care keep holy day
The wrong, than others the right way;
Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to. . ."

And so on, in the masterly doggerel which made all London rock with laughter. This is the picture of Puritanism that we like and remember. Puritanism is "the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, will be happy," as Mencken once said. There is truth in this. A man who has a very long nose in caricature usually has something of a long nose in real life. But he may also have qualities which it did not suit the caricaturist to reveal.²

²The description of Charles's home-coming is from George M. Trevelyan, *England Under the Stuarts* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920), p. 330. "Hudibras", by Samuel Butler, is quoted from R. P. T. Coffin and A. M. Witherspoon, editors, *Seventeenth-Century Prose and Poetry*, Part II, p. 170. The statement ascribed to H. L. Mencken is from "Clinical Notes" by him and George Jean Nathan, in *American Mercury*, January, 1925, p. 59, and is cited in Ralph Barton Perry, *Puritanism and Democracy* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1944), p. 239.

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My anniversary thoughts upon the lost cause of Puritanism turn to other aspects of this pregnant movement. Historians have been nearly unanimous in acclaiming the legality, the propriety, and the contemporary popularity of the Restoration of King Charles II. The Puritan Commonwealth had failed after an eleven-year run and the devout cause had been discredited. But England was never the old England again. Although the monarchy and the Anglican Establishment were restored, there was a new day. The king would have gladly exercised, or had his ministers exercise for him, the power of an absolute monarch; most of the bishops willingly witnessed for a time the suppression of the non-conformist sects; but a century of Puritanism, coinciding with a century of constitutional change, had rendered absolute monarchy unlikely and religious uniformity impossible. Unsuspected in 1660 by most observers, and not always discerned in 1960, the unpopular saints had fertilized some priceless seeds of both of liberalism and of social values which may outlast our liberal hopes.³

Puritanism Defined — Scripturism

As a preliminary to analysis let us attempt a clear definition. Although Puritanism may be considered a perennial tendency — for example, the belief that every man has a "spiritual component" which "ought to control rigorously the demands of his fleshly component, the body" — the arguments for considering it an entity seem to me to be entirely convincing. Puritanism was such-and-such a movement which arose, flowered and declined in a certain period of history. Specifically, it was an English movement for the reform of religion, flourishing in time over the century from about 1560 to 1660, consisting of a diversity of particular manifestations, all emphasizing personal religious experience, subjecting the existing social order to critical scrutiny based upon various readings of the Bible, and aiming at the establishment of some form of the holy community. Of

³The long accepted view that the return of Charles II was both popular and expedient has not been discredited. Godfrey Davies in his detailed study, *The Restoration of Charles II* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1955), p. 355, concludes: "One of the few safe generalizations about the Restoration is that it happened because the vast majority of Englishmen wanted it to happen." Christopher Hill has criticized this view, but has not established one to supersede it. (See "The Great Myth of the Restoration", *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, June 2, 1960.) Suppose it be admitted that "a restoration was the cheapest way of reuniting the propertied class against the threat from below." It can hardly be proved that "the threat from below" represented the opinion of the majority of Englishmen. Quotations from extant memoirs do not suffice to prove—or at least to weigh—"widespread dissatisfaction" with the return of Charles II. That the decision to abolish the monarchy had been fanatical, and that the crusade to maintain a republic was doomed to frustration, is impressively argued by Alan Simpson in *Puritanism In Old and New England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), Chapter V, "The Bankrupt Crusade." A recent study of the period by David Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy in England 1649-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), confirms the verdict that the republic, died "of its own contradictions" (p. 314).

its many features, scripturism — dogmatism based upon the Bible — is the most prominent. Scripturism can have repellently illiberal consequences. This is all the more reason for us to observe the most conspicuous fact about the scripturism of the century ending in 1660: it engendered such an incorrigibly diverse body of opinion among the English people that religious toleration became the only practical remedy against social disorder.⁴

Queen Elizabeth had hardly formulated her stately and temporizing version of the English Reformation when, out of the shock of disappointment, the Puritan movement sprang into activity. There was a tendency for Anglicans to divide into two camps, those who accepted the Elizabethan Settlement either as a satisfying guide to worship or as a necessary pattern of social order, and, on the other hand, those who insisted that the Church be further purified of unscriptural and Romish practices. The second group, the Puritans, acquired a forceful spokesman in Thomas Cartwright, a professor at Cambridge University who during the spring of 1570 delivered a series of lectures on the Book of Acts which were highly critical of the Church of England. He was dismissed from his professorship, but a great public controversy was on. Cartwright subsequently contributed a resounding defense of what C. S. Lewis calls "bibliocracy," the rule of the book. Of his claims two were outstanding among Puritans in his day: Scripture contains a rule of all things that "can fall into any parte of mans life"; and the divinely revealed pattern for church government is presbyterianism rather than episcopacy. The promotion of the latter point was judged by the queen to be subversive. But while she quashed the presbyterian reform movement, she did not harry Puritans out of the land. Her inscrutable opportunism prompted toleration of Puritans as a merely barking but not biting minority. Presbyterianism declined, to revive later in the 1640's; meanwhile Puritanism grew among co-operating Anglicans,

⁴The description of Puritanism as a perennial tendency is quoted from Crane Brinton, *A History of Western Morals* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), pp. 215-216. See also, on page 253 of that work: "Puritanism was born in the Mediterranean, with Moses and with Plato. . ." There is no point in refuting such a useful conception. A definition of Puritanism is only an instrument to clarify thought. Mine owes much to A. S. P. Woodhouse, William Haller, Alan Simpson, and M. M. Knappen. See especially Woodhouse, *Puritanism and Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), Introduction, pp. 35-36 and pp. 38-39; Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (Harper Torchbooks, 1957), p. 5; and Simpson, *op. cit.*, pp. 2, 5, 17, 39, 103. Professor Knappen, in *Tudor Puritanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), pp. 3-5, begins his story of Puritanism in 1524 with Tyndale's departure for Germany. Professor Haller calls Chaucer's parson a Puritan, but ascribes the origin of "historic Puritanism, with which this book is concerned", to the early years of the reign of Elizabeth (*op. cit.*, pp. 3-5). Professor Simpson insists that the experience of conversion, separating the saints from the rest of mankind, is "the essence of Puritanism" (*op. cit.*, p. 2, p. 39). John D. Eusden in *Puritans, Lawyers, and Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), Chapter I, finds the distinctive features of early seventeenth-century Puritanism not in the matter of church polity but in theology, specifically in a concern for divine grace, good works, personal religious experience, and submission to the Scriptures (pp. 19-25).

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among non-separating Congregationalists, and, more notoriously but in fewer numbers, in small maverick groups of Separatists who withdrew entirely from the established Church. By the end of Gloriana's reign the chorus of barks was far beyond the classic harmonies of presbyterianism.⁵

However Puritans may have differed on church polity they agreed upon the necessity of God's grace, of which they believed the Bible gave indispensable information. Consequently their movement aroused a widespread interest in the study of the Scriptures. Conditions within Elizabethan England favored Bible study; the increasingly urban character of the population, some diffusion of wealth, the growing number of printing presses, the absence of widely disseminated secular reading matter like newspapers and magazines, all these circumstances contributed to the abundant opportunity for circulating and studying the Scriptures. Elizabeth herself complained that in London "every merchant must have his schoolmaster and nightly conventicles, expounding scriptures and catechizing their servants and maids." Frequently in manor houses Puritan squires presided over the regular readings, and in the next century among them would be Hampden and Cromwell. By the beginning of the Stuart era, as Trevelyan has put it, "the study of the Bible was becoming the national education."⁶

An assumption that usually goes with scripturism is that all honest seekers will find the same truths in the Bible. The century of Puritanism demonstrates that this assumption is unfounded. As William Haller has observed, the fact of the matter is that Scripture "worked upon men of uncritical minds, lively imaginations, differing temperaments and conflicting interests not as a unifying but as a divisive force." By the time of the reign of Charles I the group of early agitators, the Presbyterians, were the party of the Right in an increasingly amorphous movement of opposition which had extended to a Center and a Left. Not all who claimed God's grace found His decree that presbyterianism was the one true polity for the church. Among the Congregationalists, those who held that a parish should be independent, there were some who believed in a national establishment

⁵The growth of Puritan congregations and Queen Elizabeth's attitude toward them are described in Haller, *op. cit.*, Chapter I. Eusden, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-19, observes that the influence of Presbyterians, already in decline in the 1590's, was further hurt by James I's rebuke at the Hampton Court Conference, and that the Puritan Anglicans were the most numerous and influential among early seventeenth-century Puritans. For Cartwright's place in the Puritan movement see H. C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge: University Press, 1958), pp. 163-182; and Knappen, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-246. The quotation in this paragraph is from Cartwright's *Reply to an Answer to M. Doctor Whitgift*, as cited in C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 446.

⁶The spread of Bible reading is described in Haller, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-19, and Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61 and 344-345. Simpson, explaining why converts were made up of nearly all classes, says, "Puritanism was the religion of a Book. . ." (*op. cit.*, p. 11). The complaint of Elizabeth is quoted from J. E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I* (Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), p. 321.

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of loosely federated local churches and there were others who believed in a complete separation of the local from the national church. The latter became increasingly numerous as time went on and as various ones among the elect pilgrims insisted upon a clean break with corruption. Indeed the impulse to secede from error was inexorable. Once the church was admitted to be a voluntary association there was nothing to prevent an enthusiastic minority of ten from abandoning fifty who spurned some new light on the Word. And so a luxuriant crop of sects finally arose, first condemning the established order and then separating from one another. "The Reformation achieved one of its logical possibilities," says Alan Simpson, "with the individual becoming a church in himself." The Puritan love of God was a many-splintered thing.⁷

It was indeed this splintering tendency of the Puritan movement, impelled by conflicts in both exegesis and social status, which ruined it as a political force after its victory over the monarchy in the 1640's. Hardly was the army of King Charles I overcome in the field at Naseby when the Parliamentary powers, representing ideologically the cause or causes of Puritanism, began to feud among themselves. The first big split occurred when the army quarreled with the Presbyterian-dominated Parliament. Army leadership then inaugurated the radical phase of the Puritan Revolution during which the king was executed and a republic installed. But the army was without underlying unity and without a popular program. Only the genius of Oliver Cromwell enabled the Puritan Commonwealth to hold together for as long a time as it did. After his death in 1658 the army's "divided interest," as contemporaries called it, the conflict between the superior officers and their subordinates, was exposed to a populace already alienated by the inquisitorial morality of the ruling minority.⁸

⁷The divisive tendency of scripturism is described by Haller, pp. 14-19, Simpson, Chapter III, and Knappen, Chapter XVIII. The latter writes (p. 359): "It was the problem of interpretation which caused the real difficulty. . . . Left alone with their Bibles, sincere and simple-minded believers would make different senses out of the same original text." The Puritan parties of the Right, Center, and Left are explained by A. S. P. Woodhouse in his Introduction already cited, pp. 14-19. The varying convictions about the organization of the Church early in the Stuart era are discussed in Eusden (*op. cit.*, pp. 12-19); he finds a wide area of agreement among Puritan Anglicans, Presbyterians and pre-war Independents, separation not having yet become a widespread movement. The quotation is from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁸This paragraph admittedly compresses the events of the Puritan Revolution to the point that distortion is risked. It is well known that religion was not the only issue in the Puritan Rebellion, that there was at the same time a constitutional movement in which Crown and Parliament attempted new adjustments to new national conditions. For the disunity among Puritans after Naseby see I. Deane Jones, *The English Revolution* (London: William Hennemann, Ltd., 1931), pp. 80-110. Details of the army debates of 1647-49 are available in Woodhouse, *op. cit.* A picture of the army's "divided interest" after Cromwell's death is given in Godfrey Davies, *op. cit.*; see especially pp. 356-357. Davies suggests on p. 363 that it was because of Cromwell that the Restoration was postponed eleven years and thus Puritanism was enabled "to spread its roots deeply and widely so that the Clarendon Code could not eradicate them."

The Single Society vs. Freedom

To most moderns it is a pleasure to know that arrogant piety, grounded in scripturism, worked with personal interest to prepare the fall of Puritanism. We should be equally willing to observe the effects of Puritan scripturism on the decline of human bondage. The obvious objection against any praise to Puritans is that their movement was shot through with a thousand impulses to meddle and to regiment. Was not Calvin the biggest busy-body of all remembered political bosses? Did not the Puritans subscribe to his theocratic notions? There is no room here to examine Calvin's influence on Puritanism, which was considerable but not controlling. A more profound objection to an uncritical compliment to the Puritans is that they raised the temperature of public debate. Yet the heat drove many to the fresh air of nature and reason. An issue to keep in mind is this: the medieval commitment to the theory of the single society was still generally accepted during the century of Puritanism; and, although most Puritans intended to capture the single society and make it conform more faithfully to the will of God, the uncontrollable tide of populism which their movement unleashed helped bring to an end the very notion of a church-state union.⁹

The term single society refers to the idea of a Christian commonwealth in which Church and state, in close co-operation, constitute a single social organism. According to this idea an established Church operates to the limits of the territorial borders and functions as both the custodian of public worship and the arbiter of morals. The point on which the contemporary American finds the Puritans most obnoxious is their desire for a union of Church and state. Yet it is only fair to keep in mind that if most Puritans wanted such a union, nearly everyone else did too during the century which we are considering — nearly everyone except some left-wing Puritans, Anabaptists, and a few Free Spirits. Ever since the fourth century, when Christianity attained the status of a perse-

⁹The influence of the Genevan model upon English Puritans is examined in Knappen, *op. cit.*, Chapter VII, and in Eusden, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-40. C. S. Lewis has a brief but illuminating discussion of the relationship between Calvinism and Puritanism on pages 42-44 of his *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, already cited. He pictures the Puritans as "a hard core" among a wider circle of men, "the merely Calvinist fringe". On the other hand Eusden says that the Puritans "radiated out from a hard core of Calvinist doctrine" (*op. cit.*, p. 19). He means that Puritanism was an elaboration, in the matter of devotional warmth an improvement, upon basic Calvinist themes, whereas Lewis is attempting to distinguish the more rigorous reformists from the many Anglican clericals who in most matters of doctrine agreed with Calvin. Perhaps the classic treatment of Calvin by a twentieth-century humanist is Preserved Smith's. In his *Age of the Reformation* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), p. 174, he says, "In fact, there was never such a busy-body in a position of high authority before nor since." The growth of religious populism, "fomented by the Puritan preachers of the church," is mentioned by Haller on pp. 260-261. The metaphor of temperature is Alan Simpson's: "If the Puritans enlarged the freedom of debate, they emphatically raised its temperature." See "Saints in Arms: English Puritanism As Political Utopianism," *Church History*, June, 1954, p. 124.

cutting religious monopoly within the Roman Empire, the church in Western Europe had been an established church. The single society was taken for granted. An important reason why religion stirred such high excitement in Elizabeth's reign was that kingdoms were at stake. It was the Roman Catholic compulsion to control England that necessitated the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. It was the Anglican assumption that "one and the same people are the Church and Commonwealth" that supplied the justification for Elizabeth's policy of uniformity, such as it was, and, later, the more rigorous program of Charles I and Archbishop Laud. The Presbyterian faction, at the height of their agitation in the 1580's and later under more prosperous conditions during the opening years of the Long Parliament, intended to get control of the single society and to place it under new management. In the earlier period they were concerned to magnify the church, to protect it from being "shuffled wyth the common wealth," whereas during the Great Rebellion their objective, to the discomfort of their Scotch brethren, was the effectual supremacy of Parliament over both church and state. But whether the emphasis was theocratic, Erastian, or on a partnership which came between the two extremes, the goal was a good single society. Believing that the Scriptures supplied a blueprint for such a project they hoped to established a holy commonwealth. This ambition was not peculiarly Presbyterian. All Puritans shared something like it. In the wide diversity of theories among Puritans one common to them all appears to be the ideal of the holy community.¹⁰

¹⁰The church-state union which I call the single society is sketched in R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1926), Chapter I, Section I, "The Social Organism". The Anglican ideal is described by Haller, *op. cit.*, Chapter VI. Eusden points out (*op. cit.*, pp. 32-34) that the majority of seventeenth-century Puritans up until 1640, while desiring a national establishment, proposed neither theocratic nor Erastian schemes of partnership between church and state. "The church had spiritual duties over which the state had no control, just as the state had civil functions over which the church had no sway" (p. 34). C. S. Lewis uses a metaphor which exposes the main difficulty of such an equal partnership: "Prince and priest in the sixteenth century both still desire to ride the pale horse theocracy: and when two men ride a horse we know where one must sit" (*op. cit.*, p. 444). That the ideal of the holy community was the one constant among divergent expressions of Puritanism is suggested in Woodhouse's Introduction already cited, pages 36-37. Alan Simpson (*op. cit.*, p. 61) suggests that there could have been no particular hope for the holy community in England had it not been for the Puritan Rebellion; in this struggle, he says, "a way is being opened for the establishment of Zion." There are of course different manifestations of the holy community. My definition of Puritanism in the fifth paragraph of this essay assumes that some form of it was sought by all Puritans—that the sanctified national life desired by Elizabethan Presbyterians is as sure an expression of the hope as was the sectarian utopianism of New Model soldiers. A further manifestation would be the separatist expressions of the holy community as a sect instead of a church-state union. The two quotations in this paragraph are from Richard Hooker and Thomas Cartwright—Hooker as cited in J. Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish, *The Western Intellectual Tradition From Leonardo to Hegel* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 164; and Cartwright as quoted in C. S. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

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Here we face a paradox. While their investigation of the Scriptures led Puritans in the development of religious individualism, at the same time they were fired with a desire to dictate a reformation of the social order. The impulse toward liberty existed side by side with zeal for reform. Professor Woodhouse sees in this paradox a typical expression of Puritan thought. Its main tendencies, he says, appear in "a series of antitheses." Somewhere near the heart of Puritanism there exists in potential and unresolved conflict the impulse to freedom and the irresistible desire to dragoon men into righteousness. . . .¹¹ It needs to be observed that the desire to control others usually took precedence over any impulse to liberate them. Freedom to most Puritans meant spiritual salvation plus the freedom of the saved minority to rule the merely natural majority. After the Presbyterian Right had lost control of the Puritan movement in 1647 the initiative passed to the Independents and Sectarians of the Puritan Center and Left. These were the ones who had noticed that new presbyter was old priest writ large, but very few of them had a conception of human liberty which might apply to the body politic. Zeal for the holy community diverted attention from the more mundane problems of constitutional liberty. The results were disastrous for Puritanism but in the long run conducive to progress toward freedom. The uncommitted grew impatient with the succession of regimes. The unregenerate tired of the efforts of the saints to be their brothers' keepers. Theatres were closed, Sunday travel except going to church was forbidden, the celebration of Christmas and much else was proscribed. All this irritated the ordinary citizen, and "the Laodicean was converted into an active enemy" of the order. "Let religion alone; give me my small liberty," exclaimed Edmund Chillenden when reproached for voting for a candidate for Parliament in 1656 who had no reputation for godliness. He spoke from the heart of England. By 1660 the thought of dragooning men into righteousness was an offensive joke. And when a fine set of Utopias became ridiculous the whole idea of the single society was made suspect. By 1688 even lukewarm Anglican uniformity was dropped. Embarrassed by the persistence of nonconformity and by the recent fanaticism of King James II, in that year the bishops requested a Parliament to make liberty of conscience secure. Apparently nobody, not even the trustees of the Anglican monopoly, believed that religious uniformity was any longer feasible.¹²

¹¹The antithesis between the Puritans' impulse to liberty and their zeal for reform is explained in Professor Woodhouse's Introduction, pp. 43-53. See also his essay entitled "Puritanism and Democracy" in R. L. Schuyler and Herman Ausubel, editors, *The Making of English History* (New York: Dryden Press, 1952), p. 290. For a detailed treatment of the gradual decline of persecuting zeal as it spent itself against nonconformists, see Gerald R. Cragg, *Puritanism in the Period of the Great Persecution, 1660-1688* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1957). The quotations regarding the growing public contempt in the 1650's for Puritan regimentation are from Godfrey Davies, *The Early Stuarts 1603-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), pp. 311-312. The petition of the bishops in

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The idea of the single society depends upon the validity of persecution. Roland Bainton has pointed out that persecution is buttressed by three walls, an attack on any one of which will undermine a program of religious uniformity. The first prerequisite for persecution is the conviction that the truth can be clearly known; the second is that the truth in question is of importance; the third is that coercion can effectively advance the truth. The sprawling movement which was Puritanism made serious assaults on all three walls. Its multitude of doctrines discredited the idea that great parcels of truth can be infallibly discerned and safely imposed upon a whole population. Men began to look for some formula whereby a bare minimum of essential dogma might be salvaged while disputed matters like church government, methods of baptism, and theories of the human will might be left to the taste or conscience of the individual. Finally, even the leaders of the Church of England, still preferring a large serving of dogma, nevertheless concluded that any attempt to impose it on all society was impractical.¹²

This account so far explains how Puritanism contributed by default to the progress of human liberty. But there were also Puritans who more directly promoted individual freedom. The largest contribution was made by the Independents and "sectaries," who saw that a victorious Parliament in the months after Naseby might establish a presbyterian ecclesiastical tyranny fully as distasteful as the episcopal one of the Crown. Milton is the most eloquent example of the proto-liberals of his day. At a time when he imagined that the profusion of schisms betokened for England a great national awakening he set on paper what has been perhaps the most durable of all apologies for freedom of speech, the *Areopagitica*. His argument is as follows. Since God himself is truth man most nearly reflects God's image when he seeks truth. But truth has been hewed into pieces and scattered to the winds, and the search for it is a strenuous exercise. Good and evil are inseparable in the world, and to find the good involves knowledge of evil. Such knowledge not only need not defile but actually enhances man's condition, since it offers him the opportunity to exercise the power of choice and to grow in wisdom. In short, the "scanning of error" is necessary to "the confirmation of truth," and so freedom of expression should be promoted and the "profuseness" behind it respected.¹³

October, 1688, for liberty of conscience was part of the "Ten Advices" presented to James II. The entire Address is printed in John Gutch, *Collectanea Curiosa*. . . (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1781), I, 409-413.

¹²Cf. Roland H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953), Chapter Eleven, "The Struggle For Religious Liberty".

¹³John Milton, *Areopagitica and Other Prose Works* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Everyman's Library, 1950), pp. 1-41. It should be observed that while Milton ardently recommended freedom of speech he became after 1644 (when the *Areopagitica* was published) increasingly disillusioned about England's "rousing". His later works reflect the thought that the mass of men are not fit to control public affairs; only the good can

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In the area of practical politics Oliver Cromwell went beyond most of his fellow Independents in defending liberty. In Cromwell we face one of the most controversial figures of history, an undeniably great man the nature of whose greatness remains under a cloud. Was he merely a military genius or was he also a humanitarian? The most scandalous blot on his memory is the massacre of the Irish garrison at Drogheda, a deed of *Schrecklichkeit* for which there is no liberal exoneration possible, any more than there is for the dropping of the second A-bomb in Japan at Nagasaki; there is only the explanation that Cromwell was proceeding according to the rules of war and that he believed that his drastic action would, in his own words, "save much effusion of blood." A grave indictment of his statesmanship is that he was unable to introduce, in all his turnings, a permanent government of general consent; yet perhaps no man could have done so after the English Parliament failed to reconcile divergent parties in 1647. Even those who, like Winston Churchill, criticize Cromwell severely for being a military dictator, admit that his autocracy was both apologetic and magnanimous. There was "always an effective vocal opposition;" there was "no attempt to make a party around the personality of the Dictator;" "respect was shown for private property." Above all, religious toleration "found its best friend in the Lord Protector himself." Surely this was a dictatorship which we might recommend to twentieth-century Hungarians.¹⁴

properly have this power. "Know that to be free is the same as to be pious," he wrote in 1654. See *Defensio Secunda*, excerpts in Woodhouse, *Puritanism and Liberty*, pp. 230-232. My comments on Milton assume that humanism and Puritanism overlap in him—an indication of the complexity of the man and of the two movements in question. If his scripturism is less dogmatic than Cartwright's, eventually shading into something nearly as subjective as the views of the Cambridge Platonists, then this may be taken as an indication that scripturism in running its course during the century of Puritanism was directing some sensitive seekers to a more ultimate source of authority than "atoms of Scripture, as dust before men's eyes". See Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background* (Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), pp. 75-80, and E. M. W. Tillyard, *Milton* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), pp. 156-161 and 213-234. The preceding quotation is from Thomas Hobbes and is cited in Willey, p. 79. Regarding the Independents, a recent book by George Yule entitled *The Independents in the English Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1958) demonstrates the opposition of Independent leaders in Parliament to the persecuting activities of the Puritan Church established in 1646. The Independents were committed to the idea of preserving a church-state connection, although one which permitted toleration within the sphere of grace—that is, within the church. The classical Independents did not advocate the complete freedom of expression implied in the *Areopagitica*; in the sphere of nature the state might properly repress "gross profaneness" such as denial of the Trinity and the Resurrection. See Yule, pp. 14-19.

¹⁴Although Cromwell is called an Independent he was not a "classical Independent" as these are described by George Yule, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-17; it was mainly in his wider toleration that he differed from them. For a temperate evaluation of Drogheda, see Maurice Ashley, *The Greatness of Oliver Cromwell* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1958), pp. 230-233. The judgment regarding the impossibility of a permanent Puritan settlement after 1647 is suggested by Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-279. Winston Churchill's views, which are quoted, are found in *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (New

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Cromwell is at his best in his fidelity to his early principles of religious toleration and in his going out of his way to safeguard the exercise of freedom of worship by others. In the summer of 1646 he wrote to a landlord in Northamptonshire intervening on behalf of a group of tenants who were in danger of being evicted for their religious opinions. "The trouble I hear," he said, "is they are like to suffer for their conscience. And however the world interprets it I am not ashamed to solicit for such as are anywhere under pressure of this kind; doing herein as I would be done by. Sir, this is a quarrelsome age; and the anger seems to me to be the worse where the ground is things of difference in opinion; which to cure to hurt men in their names, persons or estates will not be found to be an apt remedy." After he became Lord Protector he once removed an accused Socinian from the power of the courts, sending him to Scilly with money and books. And when Parliament in 1656 sentenced the Quaker James Naylor to be pilloried, whipped and branded for the blasphemy of allowing his disciples to hail him as the Messiah and strew his path with palm branches as he rode into Bristol, Cromwell again interceded for the nonconformists, this time unsuccessfully. He was so galled at Parliament's authority to ignore him on this issue that he wrote that he hoped to acquire, just for such cases, the royal prerogative of clemency. The problem posed by James Naylor is the same that all defense of nonconformity sooner or later meets: is there a point beyond which private judgment may not go? Under difficult circumstances Cromwell was wrestling with the elemental social problem of mankind, the reconciliation of liberty and order. If this dedicated pragmatist put the welfare of the spiritual aristocracy before the claims of constitutional stability, it must be admitted that he was most of all interested in safeguarding "the rights of religious experience."¹³

In a different setting Roger Williams similarly drew from the Puritan experience a recommendation of liberty. Of all his brethren he is cited most often as an example of Puritan zeal for reform co-existing with the impulse to liberty without stifling it. As zealous for the holy community as Calvin himself, he insisted, unlike most Puritans, that the community must be expressed in a sect rather than in a sanctified union of church and state. His line of thought — one

York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1959), Vol. II, *The New World*, pp. 314-315. Churchill's chapters on Cromwell were written in 1938-39. (See Ashley, *op. cit.*, p. 23, n. 7.)

¹³John Morley, *Oliver Cromwell* (New York: The Century Company, 1900), pp. 402-404; Maurice Ashley, *op. cit.*, pp. 174, 186, 331, 332, 366; George Yule, *op. cit.*, p. 59. Ashley's opinion of Cromwell is as flattering as scholarship permits and on some points will not convince everyone. The claim may still be made that Parliament was more abused by Cromwell than by the restored Charles II. But see Ashley's comment on seventeenth-century Parliaments (pp. 364-65). Simpson (*op. cit.*, pp. 84-96) presents Cromwell convincingly as a sincere and irresistible enthusiast "without a rival but also without a future," whose fanaticism burned low before the end. Yule pictures him as "that great muddled pragmatist" (*op. cit.*, p. 19)—socially conservative but (combining qualities not usual among Independents) religiously radical. "He was pre-eminently concerned with godliness and religious experience" (17).

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of his lines of thought — was that the “holy nation,” belonging to the order of grace rather than to the order of nature, must for the protection of its own purity be segregated from the community of the unregenerate. Church and state are not the same society at all. The state is a “natural, human, and civil” institution with its proper goodness distinct from godliness. The dictatorship of the saints is repudiated; to put the matter more nearly into seventeenth-century terms, the right of magistrates to deal with sins “against the light of conscience” is denied. The way is open for a fresh approach to political thinking, although Williams is not the one to take the lead here, and in this re-examination “the secularizing of the state is democracy’s opportunity,” as Woodhouse puts it. The idea, already present in Puritan thought, that the people are the sovereign foundation of civil power, may be further explored; and in actual practice a government may learn lessons of harmonious procedure in watching the church operate as a kind of autonomous guild in its midst.¹⁸

The Growth of Human Liberty

These reflections on Puritanism have been intended to direct our attention to the effect of that movement upon the growth of human liberty. What I have suggested is that Puritanism was an important factor in discrediting the twelve-hundred-year hold which the idea of the single society had acquired over the Western mind. This tearing-down process was in large part unintentional, the result of the unforeseen proliferation of doctrines which accompanied the spread of Bible-reading. But it was also promoted by the humanism which part of Milton represented, by the tolerance of a reluctant theocrat like Oliver Cromwell, and by Roger Williams’ and others’ conviction that there is an inherent error in the desire to unite church and state. It would be an inadequate summary of Puritanism which did not go one step deeper into the matter to point to a feature of Puritan experimental religion, whether of the right wing or of the left wing, which implied a rebuke to the status quo in any society. Puritanism was in the Protestant tradition of the priesthood of the believer. A Puritan assumed that every converted person had immediate access to God without depending upon the ministrations of an ordained priesthood. With such privileges went extraordinary responsibility. He must testify fearlessly concerning this faith and allow no competitive allegiance to obscure his status as a subject and servant of

¹⁸As Alan Simpson has pointed out, Williams’ ideas are “notoriously difficult to summarize”. See the nevertheless excellent summary on pp. 46-51 of *Puritanism in Old and New England*. While Williams’ contribution to liberty is real and important, it would be incorrect to picture him as particularly interested in civil liberty. It was “soul liberty” that he sought. Besides Simpson see Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*, excerpts printed in Woodhouse, *op. cit.*, pp. 267, 282, 283, 292; and Perry Miller, *Roger Williams: His Contribution to the American Tradition* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1953), especially the abridgement of *The Bloody Tenent*, pp. 108-156, and Miller’s comments on pp. 29-30, 43-45, 105-108, and 254-257.

the Eternal King of Kings. One of his basic principles was the supremacy of the informed conscience above all human institutions.¹⁷

Now it is perfectly true that the most prominent sixteenth-century reformers did not in fact advocate the individualism which is implicit in the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer. Indeed an expert in the literature of that era can say that it seems "a strange delusion" to suppose that Puritanism abolished spiritual intermediaries and left the layman alone with God. Neither Luther nor Calvin nor the Tudor Puritans admitted the autonomy of conscience — only the authority of the *informed* conscience; and of much necessary information they and their clerical colleagues remained the interpreters. But seeds of liberty were here. Even the regimenting austerity of Calvin must not blind us to the fact that the doctrine of limited obedience, which he shared with Luther and which both shared with Puritans of both Right and Left, acted as a solvent, dissolving the customary ties which bound the single society together. James I of England remembered his native Scotland, a single society dominated by Presbyterians, as "a place where beardless boys would brave him to his face." It was right-wing English Puritans during the reign of Elizabeth who taught the House of Commons the art of opposition, no mean contribution to Parliamentary development. It was the recalcitrant Scots again, still operating as a single society, who made the Puritan Revolution possible by invading England and camping on northern soil until the king was forced to call a Parliament to pay them off. And once the Revolution was on, "conscience" usurped control of the British Isles and has never since disappeared as a powerful force in the politics of the English-speaking peoples. Fundamental to the whole Puritan performance was the conviction that where the will of Caesar conflicted with the will of God "we must obey God rather than men."¹⁸

¹⁷Cf. G. P. Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: University Press, 1927), p. 8: "Omitting its political and moral causes, the Reformation largely owed its origin to the enunciation of two intellectual principles, the rightful duty of free inquiry, and the priesthood of all believers."

¹⁸The right of conscientious disobedience, usually formulated as passive obedience because active resistance was renounced, was a standard belief among both Continental and English Reformers. I have treated this subject at greater length in my unpublished dissertation (Harvard, 1958), "Passive Obedience and the Revolution of 1688." Nearly all first-generation Reformers had the same general teaching regarding political obedience: that Christians obey the government in all things except when commanded to do something against God's will, in which case the magistrate's punishment for noncompliance must be accepted without violent resistance. The Puritans were slow to arrive at an assertion of the right of violent resistance, but tended to weight the ambiguous formula of passive obedience more on the side of conscientious noncompliance than did the Anglicans. M. M. Knappen, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4, identifies passive resistance as "the burden of Puritan sermon, petition, and pamphlet throughout the sixteenth century." Winston Churchill, *op. cit.*, p. 115, calls Calvinism "a dissolving agency, a violent interruption of historic continuity." The contribution of Puritans to Parliamentary development during the reign of Elizabeth is described as follows by J. E. Neale in *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments*

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Paul Tillich says that the most important contribution of Protestantism to the world is "the principle of prophetic protest against every power which claims divine character for itself — whether it be church or state, party or leader." Luther, Calvin, Anabaptists, Anglicans and Puritans all taught and emphasized obedience to the authorities. But they all added a warning about the limits of obedience. God is not a lackey of the great. "We must obey God rather than men." It is their commitment to a higher law than any embodied in contemporary institutions which most persuasively, as far as I can see, recommends the Puritans to the admiration of a later, secular age. I believe it is fair to say that many of them, especially of the right wing, following the error of Calvin himself, many also among the more lowly of the left-wing enthusiasts, may have touched upon idolatry in supposing that some new synthesis of theirs had absolute rather than relative value. When this happened, it was the glory of Puritanism that a protest was usually close at hand to remind the saints that they were only men.¹⁹

I believe Tillich is correct in saying that it is in "the Protestant protest" that "the eternal values of liberalism are rooted." It may be that in 1960 it is already too late to save historic liberalism. It is quite possible, although I hope not, that liberal democracy is itself a lost cause. As long as the world stands, though, there will always be a need for a fresh expression of the human conscience. And just so long will Puritanism be both a dismaying and an edifying spectacle.²⁰

1584-1601 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958), p. 436: "In pursuit of their aims, they taught the House of Commons methods of concerted action and propaganda. Indeed, the art of opposition, which might be considered the outstanding contribution of the Elizabethan period to parliamentary history, was largely learnt from them or inspired by them." Margaret Judson shows that in the years before 1640 the Puritan clergy agreed with the (other) Anglicans that the king's authority was of God but took greater pains to point out that God's laws were above even kings. See Margaret Judson, *The Crisis of the Constitution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1949), Chapter VIII. The violence of the Scots, and of the English Puritans in 1642, was covered ideologically by the useful doctrine that lower magistrates may in an extremity resist higher magistrates who have grown careless of God's will. The literary expert referred to in this paragraph is C. S. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 444. The quotation about James I is from Daniel Neal, *The History of the Puritans* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1844), I, 230. The role of conscience in the 1640's is referred to by Woodhouse, *op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. 51-53 and pp. 60-70; and by Haller, *op. cit.*, Chapter X. The Scripture quotation at the end of the paragraph is from Acts 5:29.

¹⁹Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Phoenix Books, University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 230.

²⁰*Ibid.*

Phenomenology, Existential Psychology, and Psychoanalytic Ego Psychology

PAUL W. PRUYSER

My professor of philosophy used to open his magnificent lecture series on the nineteenth century with the following terse statement. One can ask from thinking, he said, basically two different things. One can demand that it be clear, but in that case it will probably not be very deep; or one can demand that it go deep, but in that case it is not likely to be very clear. If I had learned only this from my perspicacious teacher Pos¹ I would reckon myself rather well equipped for intellectual life. For to think of thinking in terms of certain special options held upon the thought process provides us with the possibility of differentiating types of thought in relation to sources, aims, and methods of the thinker. And the idea of truth, if that is the ultimate goal of all thought, loses its monistic or monolithic character. The statement implies that there are levels of truth and different forms of verbalizing truth, and this means in turn that all verbalized truths are only partial truths.

But what my teacher had in mind concretely was of course the fundamental difference between the thought forms based upon the Cartesian model and those which try to push the functional integrity of thought to its limits in order to capture hidden treasures and to give form to what is apparently unformed. Luther, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger; many men of literary genius such as Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Dostoyevski; and of course many artists seem to belong to this second category. What my teacher did not say, but which I discovered gradually, was that it is possible to combine clarity and depth on rare occasions, provided one is willing and able to tolerate a certain amount of emotional tension and intellectual strain.

People who want to think in depth have a hard time being understood, and they find it often difficult to maintain an even, systematic line of presenting their thought products. For deep thoughts by their very nature are rather unwieldy and fragmentary; it is very difficult to combine them all into a streamlined, systematic whole. Hence deep thoughts are often no more than short stories; and the verbal propositions which capture depth levels are often paradoxes.

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¹H. J. Pos, *Filosofie der Wetenschappen*. Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1947.

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And the depths that are disclosed in mystical experiences are simply unspeakable, despite the wordiness of our canonized mystics.²

But there is more to it. Certain types of experience — and these need not always be deep in the sense of being profound — may lead a thinker to an active rebellion against the very idea of system. By some people, systematic thought is looked at as something that is in bad taste; parsimony, elegance of theory and testability of propositions are considerations that no longer hold for the thinker who has become an addict of the depth dimension. And not always without reason, for even common sense will readily admit that the idea of system and systematization can be overdone. The common man is not likely to find an answer to his problems in Kant or Hegel. Systems can be overpowering and inhibitory, and quite mystical in themselves, as Kafka has demonstrated.

With these considerations in mind I would like to analyze our topic in several steps. Recognizing that existentialism is a catch-all term for very different cargoes and that the term "ego-psychology" has different meaning to different persons, even within the same profession, I will attempt to make some differentiations in the hope of being helpful to my own professional field which is psychology. I shall first give some reflections about phenomenology and existential thinking. Next I shall call attention to certain passages from Rollo May,³ through which I shall formulate some thoughts on psychoanalytic ego-psychology.

Phenomenology and Existential Thinking

That phenomenology is the description and classification of phenomena is common knowledge. Every scientist is interested in doing that — accurate information of what one is talking about in science is a first rule of order. It is rash to interpret, explain, evaluate, or predict if one does not first have an accurate and detailed description of the phenomena one is dealing with. Every empirical science is based upon given phenomena and eventually, through its theories, turns back to them. Phenomenology is thus one of the basic methods of science.

But methods are worthwhile studying for their own sake, and one of the first questions to be asked about phenomenology is how and whether this method can achieve its goal (rather the scientist's goal) of accurate description. One does not have to be a professional psychologist or an ego-psychologist to realize that description per se is a very tenuous affair, since observation — which is a

²"Mysticism could exist only in unbroken silence, whereas what has generally been a characteristic of the mystics is their copious eloquence." Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, tr. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 2.

³Rollo May et al., ed., *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*. New York: Basic Books, 1958.

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prerequisite of description — involves an observer, his perspectives, his perceptual acts, his scotomata, and perhaps certain obnubilating thoughts and biases which tend to become involved in the process of observation. And the phenomena observed, if they are worth the effort of describing them, are usually quite complex, with multiple qualities, some of which may be easily apparent while others may be rather hidden from view.

The questions which one can raise about the processes of observation and description can be scientific questions (for instance, about the perceptual process and the impact of thought, feeling, and desire upon perceiving), or they can be philosophical questions (such as the metaphysical or ontological status of phenomena, the possibilities and limitations of human knowing, etc.). Since scientists in a democracy are entitled to raise any kind of question they want, they can raise philosophical questions as well about the phenomena which they study or about themselves as observers of these phenomena. Each type of question is part of a set of rules by means of which one approaches the universe or parts thereof, and one should always know, while raising a question, to what set of rules the question belongs. A scientific question should lead to a scientific answer which lies within the sphere of assumptions that undergird the system of scientific rules. An epistemological question should be answered within the sphere of assumptions, interests, and goals which define epistemology.

I would like to define psychological phenomenology as that branch of our science that deals with the processes of "appearing to. . ." This is obviously a narrow definition. Note that it does not specify *what* appears nor *to whom* appearing occurs. For as soon as we try to define the object that appears beyond the convenient label "phenomenon" we leave the sphere of naïve realism in which science can thrive and become entangled in assumptions, statements, and questions which have a philosophical character. For instance, is there a *Ding an sich* behind the phenomenon studied? Is what appears the essence of the phenomenon or the "thing," and is "appearing" an activity of the phenomenon? Is the subject to whom something appears a recorder, a translator, a selector, or an integrator? Or is he one that constitutes the phenomenon so that it can appear?

All this becomes immensely more complex when the phenomenon studied is man himself. For in that case the phenomenon is also the observer, and human observers do not like to be called phenomena. They like to think of themselves as substances, authorities, entities, powerhouses, seers, thinkers, doers, makers, and what not. And they also like to assume that at least the particular phenomenon which does the observing *exists*. Thus there is a variety of cognitive situations one can get into. How different is this from the simple positivism and objectivism of traditional science.

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According to Lanteri-Laura⁴ the word phenomenology was coined in 1764 by Lambert for a *Lehre von dem Schein* — theory of appearance — to designate the empirical psychology of that time. This is roughly the use Jaspers makes of it in his *General Psychopathology*. In 1807 however Hegel used the word to describe the process whereby Consciousness (with a capital C, please) discovers itself in the world, in its own products and in its struggles with other consciousness-es. Much later Brentano emphasized that consciousness is intentionality, i.e., always consciousness of something outside itself. And Husserl, originally raising some questions about the nature of evidence in mathematical proof, finds it to lie in the essence of the numbers themselves. Thus the good thinker must study the *essences* of things by the now very special method of eidetic reduction in which the observer's consciousness has first to be emptied of its cultural heritage of assumptions, habits, and cognitive certainties. Whether it can also empty itself of the structures of language, which canalize all experience into distinct routes, as Whorf⁵ suggested, is still a very open question.

Meanwhile Husserl's position had for some time a salutary effect in that it emphasized that essence is all that matters, quite aside from any epistemological and ontological questions. His clarion call "Return to the things themselves" liberated some scientists in an era of epistemological preoccupation toward a readiness for doing some magnificent descriptive work. I mention particularly Stumpf's⁶ work on tone sensations, Katz's⁷ studies on color vision and Révész's⁸ work on tactile perception in which he was able to be thoroughly phenomenological and yet cast some doubt on certain overgeneralizations from Gestalt psychology. I also call attention to Buytendijk's⁹ work on pain, though this is a less "pure" phenomenology. I fervently hope that the modern preoccupation with existing and its subject-centeredness in somber melancholy will not distract my colleagues from continuing this magnificent phenomenological tradition. For the outside world and its sensory qualities is not only there in all its intricacy and splendor but has also healing powers, as every occupational therapist knows. And knowing and perceiving need not be contrasts; many results of perception are reliable!

Husserl's phenomenology points to an objective and whole world, with man as experiencer in the center, as a performer of meaning-giving acts. Its program

⁴G. Lanteri-Laura, "Philosophie Phénoménologique et Psychiatrie," *L'Evolution Psychiatrique*, 1957, 4:651-673.

⁵B. L. Whorf, *Collected Papers on Metalinguistics*. Washington, D. C.: Department of State, Foreign Service Institute, 1952.

⁶C. Stumpf, *Tonpsychologie*, 2 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1883-90.

⁷D. Katz, "Die Erscheinungsweisen der Farben," *Z. Psychol.*, 1911, Ergbd. 7. *Ibid.*, *The World of Color*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1935.

⁸G. Révész, *Die Formenwelt des Tastsinnes*, 2 vols. Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1938.

⁹F. J. J. Buytendijk, *Über den Schmerz*. Bern: Hans Huber Verlag, 1948.

is to describe all human experience "as lived," without attempts at explaining, segmenting, analyzing, and reducing, i.e., without doing with the "givens" of experience what every scientist wants to do with them. May I remark at this point that such a phenomenology, though perhaps programmatically sound, necessarily fails in its intentions as long as its account of "lived experience" is not exhaustive and complete? For a partial description is a selective description and hence biased to the same degree that it is affirmed as basic truth.

Moreover Husserl's "meaning-giving acts" of man in relation to the world include the controversial item that consciousness "constitutes the world." This is an idealistic position. But what should make us much more suspicious of the results of certain later phenomenological studies, notably those of Heidegger and Sartre, is the general mood of somberness, hopelessness, and bitter, ascetic heroism with which the human predicament (why predicament and not simply situation?) is portrayed. Van der Waals¹⁰ points out that Heidegger and Sartre postulate a direct, unreflective knowing through mood and affect: anxiety, *Sorge* (apprehensive care), boredom and nausea. The psychologist cannot help but feel that these negative affects must color (discolor) the visions of man and world, a circumstance which introduces autistic distortions of the reality picture. To my best knowledge, only a few contemporary phenomenological scholars have tried to do justice to the joyful side of man as well. I refer to Marcel's¹¹ works, particularly his analysis of hope; but here again one is faced with the circumstance of personal belief affecting the findings, for Marcel is an avowedly religious thinker. In short, psychological and particularly psychoanalytic studies of existential thinkers are much needed, if it were only to correct the mood-determined perspectives on the images of man that have been offered. Even such a careful phenomenological psychologist as Merleau-Ponty¹² admits that "phenomenology was practiced and recognized as a manner or a style." To my mind, this means that subjective preferences, appetites, and values enter into the picture, and while I am not implying that this is necessarily wrong, it does raise a question about the validity of the findings, the more so since the admixture of phenomenological method with ontological assumptions tends to suggest to the thinker and his readers that he is dealing with universal and absolutely fundamental structures. I think one should pay heed to De Waelhens'¹³ statement

¹⁰H. G. van der Waals, "De ontwikkeling der psychiatrie in verband met haar huidige maatschappelijke betekenis," in J. J. G. Prick and H. G. van der Waals, eds., *Nederlands Handboek der Psychiatrie*. Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1958.

¹¹G. Marcel, *Journal Métaphysique*. Paris: Libr. Gallimard, 1935. *Ibid.*, *Homo Viator*. Paris: Aubier, Ed. Montaigne, 1944. *Ibid.*, *Etre et Avoir*. Paris: Aubier, Ed. Montaigne, 1935.

¹²M. Merleau-Ponty, "What is Phenomenology?" *Cross Currents*, 1956, 6:59.

¹³A. De Waelhens, *La Philosophie de Martin Heidegger*. Louvain: Edit. de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1942.

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that "so-called neutral descriptions are full of moral and philosophical pre-suppositions — phenomenology is often a 'point of view' rather than pure description."

These remarks do not intend to discourage the use of the phenomenological method, nor do they aim at discarding the fund of knowledge that has been accrued under its aegis. The European term "anthropology" may be clarifying here. Kuiper¹⁴ points out that there are basically two types of anthropology: one which is clearly and openly based upon ideologies and aims at offering a *Weltanschauung*, and one which draws upon empirical-scientific data in order to arrive at an image of man. The latter may or may not be attuned to scientific goals and use. One could add a third type of anthropology which functions much as philosophy of science does but in a different style, namely for the sake of laying the ontological foundations for all scientific thought and procedures.

Meanwhile our thought has veered from phenomenology toward existentialism. This happened in part intentionally, in part by the inner momentum of phenomenological considerations. I believe that this movement also mirrors the actual historical situation in which phenomenology began gradually to merge with existentialism, although each had distinct roots and at heart also different aims. To put the gist of existentialism in a nutshell is difficult enough, and to describe adequately its history and group the authors who belong or do not belong to it is well nigh impossible. Some people feel that Socrates is one of its ancient founders, of which I am not at all sure, for he is also hailed as the father of rationalism; others, such as Tillich,¹⁵ suggest that Freud was one of the first scientists who put the existential heritage into scientific concepts and theories. To show my bias, I think that Tillich is quite right in that statement.

We would all agree though that existentialism puts its main emphasis on existence, being (and, by a peculiar ontological inconsistency, on becoming) as distinct from essence. It emphasizes concreteness rather than abstraction, individuality rather than generality, uniqueness rather than common denominators. It stresses depth rather than surface, roots and origins rather than end products and surface manifestations. It puts a premium on sincerity of feeling, tension of choice and necessity of decision-making rather than on elegance and clarity of thought. But with these positive programmatic statements go some negative ones as well. Existentialists also try to "overcome," as they say, some of the basic features of traditional Western thought, particularly systematized and scientific thought patterns. It is against scientism, against Cartesianism, against essentialist thinking. It is impatient with traditional differentiations between

¹⁴P. C. Kuiper, "Fenomenologische en anthropologische gezichtspunten," in J. J. G. Prick and H. G. van der Waals, *op. cit.*, cf. note 3.

¹⁵Paul Tillich, "Psychoanalysis, Existentialism and Theology," *Pastoral Psychology*, 1958, 9:9-17.

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subject and object, subject and predicate, thinking and being, knowing and believing. It has also little use for some traditional continuities, such as those between man and nature, stimulus and response, and the psychic continuity between child and adult. Sometimes it is also very much against the continuity of necessity which bears the name "determinism." In processes of thinking it prefers the dialectic mode: poetic creativity in language, the aphorism, and the paradox. All in all, a stupendous program!

Many of these programmatic points are well taken. Many of them have also been made by scientists who otherwise would not endorse the whole program of existentialism. For instance, one does not have to be an existentialist to see the dangers of scientism, or to doubt the validity of some of the continuities that have been basic assumptions in Western thought.

I want to select from the vast program of existentialism one point which I think is highly relevant to psychology and psychiatry. That is its general thrust in the direction of trying to do justice to the uniqueness of the individual and the uniqueness of the environment as seen by that individual. In a nutshell this is a quest for particularization in applied science. It is associated with many interesting practical problems in psychiatry, such as the validity and usefulness of the diagnostic nomenclature, the nature of psychiatric case study, and the selection of treatment modalities. But the real difficulty of this existentialist program comes to the fore when one raises the general question "Can there be a science of particulars?"

The Uniqueness of the Individual

Scientific thought is based upon collectivities which form its empirical material, and in the end it always comes back to these collectivities. Application of science to the individual is possible only to the extent that certain common denominators between this individual and others of the same collectivity are known. These common denominators may be of all kinds; in psychology they may consist of sensory qualities, reflexes, perceptual constancies, illusions, needs and need-hierarchies, types of problem solving, response repertoires, choices, patterns of canalization, value systems, decisions, and what not. One of the basic professional realities with which the scientist has to cope is that there is always some tension between pure science (basic science) and applied science. Basic science is directed to generalities and common denominators; applied science is directed to particulars with and without known common denominators. Thus we all know that basic and applied science need each other — they must go hand in hand. But the total situation involving both implies considerable tension, which is neutralized through creativity, inventiveness, testing, and the formation of new hypotheses.

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Thus existentialism's thrust in the direction of particulars is not new or original. What is new however is the strength of this thrust and the alleged reasons for this desired orientation. One may thus legitimately ask of existentialism: Is the thrust in the direction of uniqueness of the particular sustained in the development of existential thought?

If I am not mistaken the answer is yes and no. Sure enough, psychiatric case histories do improve by more minute, precise, and in some way "un-theoretical" descriptions of the patients' moods and manners. It is certainly worthwhile to study all the minutiae of that segment of the world which is relevant for the patient and the ways in which he sees it and lives with it. It is wise to assume that time and space are not exactly the same thing to everybody, or to one man at different times, and thus to study carefully the precise modes in which a person experiences time and space. To be more on our guard for slippery or hasty inferences and conjectures, and to know precisely when an examiner or therapist is making an observation and when he is giving an interpretation — all this is very much to the point.

But to know whether what we observe in another person's verbalizations is his observation, or his interpretation of that observation, or mere illusion is far more difficult. And yet it is very important to know the difference for it has diagnostic implications and makes or breaks the possibility of communication. There must be something that we can safely and comfortably call "reality" about which we can agree without having to feel that we are just fooling ourselves. Traditional psychology and psychiatry take, perhaps naively but I think wisely, the common sense attitude that reality has its immutable features which are the same for any sane person. Hence the substitution of "world design" for "world" and "reality" which occurs in quite a few existential-psychiatric writings has great dangers for any possibility of empiricism. It encourages subjectivity and gives the individual an unduly great role in the shaping of his world. I think that apperceptive freedom is much more limited than the normative term "world design" would suggest. Piaget¹⁶ has demonstrated that much in mental development is a recognition that the world consists of objects with substance and permanence.

I also see considerable danger in the assertion of some existentialists that psychology and psychiatry need to accept from ontology certain allegedly fundamental structures of being. Modern ontology has had an anthropological bent ever since the effort was made to elucidate being-in-general from the way in which being-human strikes a particular ontologist. Now one can learn from their writings what "being-human" means to Kierkegaard, to Heidegger, or to Sartre. And he can even share some of the meanings which they attribute to

¹⁶J. Piaget, *The Construction of Reality in the Child*, tr. Margaret Cook. New York: Basic Books, 1954.

or seem to find in being-human. But to assume that such particular interpretations of human life are ontological truths and thus so general that they precede psychology is too much. For one thing they seem too much mood-determined and culturally influenced to be taken as basic structures, prior to psychological investigation. For another the current definition of ontology since Heidegger as "science of being,"¹⁷ which is quoted in many existential-psychological writings, is philosophically quite controversial.

Zuurdeeg¹⁸ defines ontology as "an intelligible account of all that is" (*logos of to on or ta onta*) which seems rather Aristotelian and which has in its holistic emphasis some kinship with Jaspers' description of the world as "the encompassing." Kant's ontology is shrouded in mystery; in Hegel's writings it is a kind of system of categories which specify an essence. For Husserl it is the discipline which studies the meaning-giving acts of consciousness. Before accepting Heidegger's position one might well reconsider the reference which he makes in the foreword to *Sein und Zeit* to Plato's *Sophist* in which the stranger from Elea says:

Since then we are in a difficulty, please to tell us what you mean when you speak of being; for there can be no doubt that you always from the first understood your own meaning, whereas we once thought that we understood you, but now we are in a great strait.¹⁹

But no matter how one defines ontology, there can be no doubt that the word itself is a ponderous prestige term which sets up the expectation of a *realitas realissima* — something really-real! The danger of all ontologies is that they claim universality for certain convictions which may be quite whimsical. They may lead to prematurely closed systems of thought, as Zuurdeeg points out. Or as Lichtenberg put it: "There is a sort of transcendental ventriloquy by which man can be made to believe that something which was said on earth came from heaven."²⁰

With this much confusion about the status and definition of ontology and hence about the things that are considered to have priority as "Ur-structures," scientists tend to be drawn into muddied waters when they endorse a "science of being." Science is the study of *beings* in their qualities and interactions, not of pure being. In its ill-fated concern with being existential thought tends to play down, deny, or ignore certain empirical truths, such as the continuity between man and animal and man and nature. In most existential writings our animal

¹⁷M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*. Halle: Niemayer, 1935.

¹⁸W. Zuurdeeg, *An Analytical Philosophy of Religion*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958.

¹⁹Heidegger, *op. cit.*

²⁰F. H. Mautner and H. Halfield, eds., *The Lichtenberg Reader*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1959.

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ancestry, the body, and its processes are sorely neglected. The crucial biological concepts of adaptation, integration, regulation, and development are made light of.

Furthermore the idea that existentialism is concerned with existence, in contrast to the "essentialist" orientation of the sciences, needs careful checking against the end-products, i.e., the existentialist's own images of man. To be sure, these images are very different from the eighteenth century image of natural man, of la Mettrie's *Homme Machine*, etc. But the new images of man are just as essentialist as the old ones, despite the Sartrean slogan that in man existence precedes essence. To become authentic, to become an individual, or even just "to become," are adhortations which can only be derived from an *essence* of human existence which is felt to lie in being authentic, individualized, or becoming. Such essence seems to include for some authors also an enormous amount of freedom, as if one could become just about anything one wanted, in a world that is malleable and fluid and without resistance, and without regard for certain determining tendencies or limiting structures of one's body. Similarly the essence of man is felt to contain the item "transcendence";²¹ this poses the ideal of reaching a higher state of perfection independent of such processes as growth and development and rational decision making. To me all such statements are very essentialist. Some are quite moralistic.

Because of these various considerations one should pay heed to the distinction between the *existential* thought of Heidegger and the *existentielle* thought of Jaspers.²² I believe this is a fundamental distinction which is often glossed over in recent American writings. These two German words might be translated as "existential philosophy" and "philosophy of existence." Jaspers demands the ceaseless search of philosophizing, rejecting the crystallized structures of various philosophies as artifacts. He has also warned, according to De Waelhens, for the consequences which existential philosophy would have for a science that is over-ready to incorporate its results. With it science would incorporate ontological assertions of a sweeping, general nature which could actively hinder the scientist in coming to grips with the particulars or individuals of his concern. For ontological statements are supposed to have general and objective validity, while a psychology guided by the principle of individualization is interested not in the generalities but in the uniqueness of the particulars.

Along with this distinction the word *Dasein* and its derivatives have different meanings for different writers. The same holds, as we saw, for terms such as ontological and ontic. And cardinal differences in the meanings of these words

²¹Another prestige term which is felt to be so self-explanatory that many writers do not even bother to spell out *what* is transcended.

²²For some discussion of these differences and for some thoughts on the relations between ontology and psychology, see: A. De Waelhens, *op. cit.*, and Walter Kaufman, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), chapter 1.

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are produced when they are placed in a theocentric framework such as Kierkegaard's and Marcel's.

Our position in regard to these differences will depend on what we mean when we say that our time is in need of an anthropology, to aid the particular sciences now dealing with certain aspects of man. The many different words now in use to describe such endeavors give a clue to the multiplicity of meaning: one hears much talk of models, images, doctrines, sciences, and theories of man. To my mind the biggest service which anthropology can render to psychology (or any other science dealing with man) is when its propositions are derived from *all* the empirical specialties dealing with man. Such propositions are not likely to come from an *a priori* discipline called ontology, which by its own program has to neglect or ignore or doubt or "shelve" and "bracket" the knowledge which the various sciences have accrued.

On the other hand we all know that even the best theoretical frameworks tend to get rusty in time. They all allow for orthodox, neo-orthodox, and liberal use. This depends sometimes more on the user than on the theory, but the net effect is that even a good theory can be poorly used, and a poor theory well used. Good theories are conducive to perpetual enrichment from within as well as absorption of riches from elsewhere. Sometimes a partial detachment from one's own theoretical framework is necessary before one can see new possibilities and challenges. But this requires a playful attitude towards all theories and particularly towards one's own thought products. The freedom of man, which is so exalted in existentialism, should first of all pertain to the drawing and redrawing of his pictures of himself. Trying to capture one's essence in the form of a theory is fun, like catching a butterfly.

I can't help but feel that existential thought so far has shown very little of this desirable playfulness and very little humor and elegance. Its language is overworked and frightfully ponderous; its temper is somber. This is small wonder, for the sort of man which existentialism describes tends to carry the burden of responsibility for the whole world on his shoulders. Even love tends to lose its sparkle and loveliness, its pleasantries and lightness in the heavy and melancholy writings of many existentialists. I would like to suggest that our new anthropology pay careful attention to the data of cultural anthropology which tell of more carefree, joyful, and playful attitudes toward life in some cultures. These also belong to the essence of man.

Being, an Empty Concept

Meanwhile I believe that I have already made quite a few ego-psychological remarks about phenomenology and existentialism. It is now time to consider psychoanalytic ego-psychology explicitly. Perhaps the best starting point is in a

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quote from May: "When Freud's analysis is pushed to the ultimate extreme. . . we have everything except being."²³ I think this statement makes sense only when "being," that vague and poorly defined term, stands for something very desirable and essential. It reminds one of Heidegger's famous phrase *Das Wesen des Daseins liegt in seiner Existenz*²⁴ of which De Waelhens²⁵ has remarked that what is really meant is *Das Wesen des Daseins liegt in der Sorge*. This correction illustrates beautifully the sagacity of Woodger's²⁶ thesis that it is impossible to say that something exists without saying something else about it. Applying these considerations to May's statement means logically that "being" as such is a dispensable category (because it is an empty concept) for psychology. May however tries to convince his readers of the necessity of that concept by this case history of the woman who says "I am,"²⁷ which he considers the most basic ontological experience. In the light of my previous remarks it is obvious that I have serious doubts about the possibility of any human being ever experiencing just this "I am" without anything else. Experience is simply not that empty, or else it is not experience. Something else must be attached to the "I am," for instance "joyful," "here," "old," or "alive." It is likely to attain the form of a simple judgment such as "it is good that I am," or "I like myself." We are again reminded of Woodger's observation that it is impossible to say that anything exists without saying more about it. May's patient said in effect, "I am," and this "I" has experiential references which imply certain qualities.

At this point psychoanalysis would hold that even the most minimal and meager experience of oneself proceeds from the proprioceptive and exteroceptive functions of the ego. I mention both of these perceptual modalities in order to stress that this always implies uniqueness, for while exteroceptive impressions may refer to a world which one has in common with others, his proprioceptive sensations are exclusively his own. Ego and body are intimately related. One root for the experience "I am" is the fact that I am this body, which is given to me in multiple perceptual fragments and normally synthesized into one individual whole. And even if one tries to go back to the archaic experiences of infants, as many psychoanalytic writers have done, one will always find some attribute, indicative of some essence. For instance, Federn²⁸ has noted that the most primitive pre-reflective cathexis (kin to Sartre's pre-reflective *cogito*, but

²³Rollo May, "Contributions of Existential Psychotherapy," in May *et al.* eds., *Existence*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²⁴M. Merleau-Ponty, "What is Phenomenology?" *op. cit.*

²⁵A. De Waelhens, *op. cit.*

²⁶J. H. Woodger, *Physics, Psychology and Medicine*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1956, p. 62.

²⁷Rollo May, "Contributions of Existential Psychotherapy," *op. cit.* pp. 42-3.

²⁸P. Federn, *Ego Psychology and the Psychoses*. New York: Basic Books, 1952.

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with energy) or "medial ego feeling" consists in an experience of buoyancy! It is charged with affect from the start.

Moreover every perceptual act, and of course every act of synthesis as well, is accompanied by attention cathexes by means of which energies become invested in specific distribution patterns over a whole range of relevant perceptual data including those of the body and their locations. Whether these patterns are articulate or diffuse, they constitute primitive forms of self-feeling and convince a person, albeit sometimes subliminally, that he is also an action-center.

The processes so far described are made possible by apparatus of the ego, which have their primary autonomy and which are by no means only epiphenomenal products of development or conflict. As a matter of fact, Piaget²⁹ has been able to describe some interesting details of these functions without assuming any "seething cauldron" of Id forces.

The psychoanalytic concept of the ego, as evolved from several successive phases of psychoanalytic theory revision (a process which still goes on), accounts for a great many functions and processes which have been deemed important by existentialists. But it contains also some functions of which we hear very little in existentialism. I am referring to such important functions as adaptation through which the person comes to terms with the outside world, a coming to terms which is always individualized and unique, because both the person and his perceptions and conceptions of the world are to a large extent subjective. This is all the more so, since the ego has to make adaptations to the inner environment of the person as well, i.e., to drives and drive derivatives, to super-ego demands, and to its own ideals, each of which represent not only qualities to be harmonized but also forces. Conversely the ego, through its own capacity to impose controls (such as delay, symbolization, neutralization, and sublimation) also demands some degree of adaptation from these other agents to itself. And in the third place it has the stupendous task of bringing these various aspects of the inner environment into an adaptive relation to the outer environment. Such adaptive patterning of multiple qualities and forces can hardly be anything but unique and highly individualized! And even if adaptation is poor by somebody's standards, there is always enough activity going on to convince the individual that he *is*, that he exists.

Existentialist Objections

It would no doubt be boring if I were to list here all the functions and structures which contemporary ego psychology has delineated or hopes to clarify

²⁹J. Piaget, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*, tr. Margaret Cook. New York: International Universities Press, 1952.

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in the future. I refer for convenience to the works of Hartmann,³⁰ Rapaport,³¹ Kris,³² and the ongoing experimental work of Klein³³ and his associates. I also want to call attention to the excellent work of Merleau-Ponty³⁴ whose phenomenological studies of perception give a firm support to the general framework of psychoanalytic ego processes. Let me select just a few "pet peeves" of some existentialist "conscientious objectors."

Let us begin with the very old one that psychoanalysis is addicted to the past of a person. True, psychoanalysis does look carefully into a person's past, for psychoanalysis is among other things a genetic theory which is meant to have explanatory power. But that past is, even in etiological studies, constructed from present memories and meanings, related by a person who now suffers from their impact. And in therapy we are always dealing with present memories, hopes, urges, conflicts, and aspirations which cover every conceivable point on the time scale. On this score psychoanalysis would have no quarrel with Augustine's dictum: "Only the present really is. There are only three times: a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future." But it does emphasize the presence-of-things-past-in-the-present-of-things-present, for it has learned that Augustine's three presents are not separate entities. Moreover we are not dealing with an abstract spatialized time, to use Bergson's term, but with the time dimensions and time distortions, the shrinkings and stretchings of the patient's subjective experience of time. It is also important to distinguish between "living life" and "understanding life." "Life is lived forward and understood backward" said Kierkegaard. The genetic point of view is in the service of understanding; indirectly a new understanding of the past helps to reconstruct the issues of the present so as to facilitate decisions which will affect the future.

Existentialism's emphasis on dealing with the whole person needs hardly any defense, but neither can it be used at this day as a rebuttal of other psychological orientations, for there is hardly a contemporary clinical-psychological system that dares ignore this emphasis. Moreover I believe that ego-psychology's explicit concern with synthesizing, integrative, and regulatory

³⁰H. Hartmann, *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation*, tr. David Rapaport. New York: International Universities Press, 1958.

³¹D. Rapaport, *Organization and Pathology of Thought*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1951. *Ibid.*, "The Theory of Ego Autonomy: a generalization," *Bull. Menninger Clin.*, 1958, 22:13-35.

³²E. Kris, "Comments on the Formation of Psychic Structure," *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 1946, 2:11-38.

³³G. S. Klein, "The Personal World through Perception," in R. R. Blake and G. V. Ramsey, eds., *Perception: an Approach to Personality*. New York: Ronald Press, 1950.

³⁴M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la Perception*. Paris: Gallimard, 1945. *Ibid.*, *La Structure du Comportement*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1942.

functions in their configuration is here ahead of many other theories, which carry holistic considerations only as a programmatic requisite. I think here particularly of the work of Nunberg³⁵ and Menninger.³⁶ And may I ask in passing whether the categorical analysis of Minkowski and the categorical case histories of Binswanger do not run a serious risk of fragmenting the patient into multiple bits?

The history of psychology shows, particularly in Europe, that a strong emphasis on the whole person in his uniqueness may easily lead to the fragmentation of mankind into distinct classes and of the individual into states *a, b, c*, etc. One almost inevitable outcome of the phenomenological approach has been the setting up of ideal types. This is demonstrated in such a chapter heading as "The World of the *Schizophrenic*." It is also apparent in the sharp discontinuities which phenomenology has established between adult and child, animal and man, health and illness, clock time and vital time. Such pervasive discontinuities in thought are also typical of a thought style which reinforces the use of an outmoded psychiatric nomenclature and the belief in separate disease entities. It again arrives at "states" of a certain permanence, more or less closed upon themselves, much like the categorical distinctions which Goldstein has introduced between persons with healthy and damaged brains.

The thrust of psychoanalysis has been in the opposite direction. It emphasizes process, dynamic movement, and genetic continuity. It has also helped us see some basic inter-human continuities thus far obscured by moral, aesthetic, or ponderously-scientific prejudices. It has provided the framework for unitary concepts of health and illness which are at once humane, realistic, and useful.³⁷ In the adaptation model of psychoanalysis the inside-outside problem is not prematurely closed but leaves room for the recognition of certain separate and verifiable realities such as "I," "other," "my body," "his body," "the world" which are engaged in incessant mutual adaptations. The two-fold aspect of adaptation, which Piaget has called "assimilation" and "accommodation,"³⁸ guarantees at one time the relative autonomy of each part of reality and their subordination to the whole of the bio-noosphere.

Much has been said for and against the psychoanalytic concept of transference. Comparisons with the concept of "encounter" have been made time and again, often between an exalted notion of the latter and a caricaturistic

³⁵H. Nunberg, "The Synthetic Function of the Ego," *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 12:1931.

³⁶K. A. Menninger *et al.*, "The Psychological Examination in the Psychiatric Case Study," *Bull. Menninger Clin.*, 1959, 23:131-143. *Ibid.*, *Psychiatric Nosology and Diagnosis* (unpublished manuscript).

³⁷H. Ey, *Etudes Psychiatriques*, vol 3. Paris: Desclée-de Brouwer & Cie, 1954. B. Llopis, "La Psicosis Unica," *Arch. de Neurobiol.*, 1954, 17:1-39. K. A. Menninger *et al.*, "The Unitary Concept of Mental Illness," *Bull. Menninger Clin.*, 1958, 22:4-12.

³⁸J. Piaget, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*, tr. Margaret Cook. New York: International Universities Press, 1952.

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misinterpretation of the former. Everybody knows, or can know, that not everything which transpires between the patient and his therapist is transference. If it were, therapy or even any change would be impossible. And everybody also knows that encounters belong to the cherished experiences in a person's life which are relatively few in number and constantly open for improvement. Thus the psychoanalytic process deals with transference phenomena in such a way as to make encounters possible. Encounter is a goal, transference interpretation a means, of therapy.

But perhaps much more relevant than all these detailed considerations is the fact to which Tillich³⁹ has called attention. And that is the depth dimension, which is explicit in the personologic concepts of psychoanalysis. In this personology the basic insights of the existential tradition have been given conceptual status. Love and hate, life and death, being and non-being are stated in psychological terms, and as dynamic tendencies which set both a task and provide an opportunity for the human organism. The world is outside but is also to be looked for within the person, in the super-ego and ego-ideal. But the world outside, particularly the human world, must also be seen as a product of the constructive and destructive forces inherent in each individual. Living is a process which permits no interruptions; it requires the maintenance of perpetual tension. It costs something at every step no matter what one does, for multiple adaptations, accommodations, and assimilations have to be made. The irrationality of existence is conceptualized in the dynamic power of the unconscious;⁴⁰ the struggle for rational knowledge and control in the theory of the ego and its many functions. Man, for the existentialists and for psychoanalysis, is a house divided against itself. Life is full of inner contrasts and polarities — some major contrasts are conceptualized structurally in the topological and structural theories. Dynamically resistances abound everywhere, for the single organism, society, and the world have their immutable solidities. Evil, in all its forms such as pain, death, suffering, hostility, the urge to hate and kill, is given the status of an instinct, solidly anchored in the individual, the species, and even the universe. It is not delegated to the culture or to parents or just to "frustration." There are demonic determinations *in* man which co-determine his willing and thus severely impair his freedom.

³⁹Paul Tillich, "Psychoanalysis, Existentialism and Theology," *op. cit.*

⁴⁰Reference to the unconscious is conspicuously missing in the writings of many existential psychiatrists. Alexander has noted this also in the circle of existential psychotherapists. Cf. F. Alexander, "Impressions from the Fourth International Congress of Psychotherapy," *Psychiatry*, 1959, 22:89-95.

The Freedom of Man

And with the dangerous word "freedom" I think we have come to the heart of the matter. It is the most exalted word in the vocabulary of contemporary existentialists; around it rally also the theorists of self-actualization, self-realization, selfhood or just plain "Self" (but with a capital S). Freedom is the great premise, the battle cry, and the great promise. In its name one can vigorously denounce determinism, scientism, reductionism, genetic reconstruction, causal reasoning, objectivity, logic and the rules of analysis, even the forms and strictures of language. In the name of freedom many existentialists, and now several existential psychologists and psychiatrists, have bored their readers by recondite, abstruse, and outlandish writings, oblivious of the age-old Zoroastrian dictum that to bore anyone is a great sin. There is a tendency to forget that Kierkegaard, the father of modern existentialism, was a great wit, an entertaining host and guest, a sharp stylist, and a man cautious with ontological concepts. He had also a down-to-earth sobriety in regard to the freedom of man.

The temper of psychoanalysis is not to exalt freedom but to *deal with the unfreedom of man*. Neither freedom nor unfreedom are elevated to ontological status; what is said and done is simply that some people, fettered by severe limitations, may catch a glimpse of a less troubled, less hemmed-in existence. It is an empirical truth for psychoanalysis — and not an ontological decree — that human beings live in bondage to their instincts, their superegos, or more generally to the conditions of their group life and their struggle with nature. There is bondage to rules and mores, to moral precepts and societal arrangements of great power. Empirically freedom is a matter of more or less. The heroes of André Gide who commit *actes gratuits* are, from a psychoanalytic point of view, no more free than the less spectacular and un-heroic bourgeois shopkeeper who does everything to try to live in peace with his clients. And the Self-Taught Man in Sartre's *Nausea* who is enslaved to an alphabetical system of readings may on closer scrutiny be no less free than the relentless Roquentin.

I have always admired the element of soberness and asceticism in classical psychoanalysis, especially in regard to the highly explosive theme of the freedom of man. I admire the conceptualization of the therapist's role as one of persistent "concerned neutrality," with the patience to wait for the "kairos." There is no place in this role for adhortation, preaching, proclamation, or seductive promises, for they would all in direct or oblique ways tinker with the freedom of the patient. Freedom is simply *demonstrated* in the behavior of the analyst by something which Kierkegaard called the "teleological suspension of the ethical." That is, by his methodical non-judgmental attitude, his refusal to bargain, to punish, to promise, to force into conformity, or to make easy compromises, the analyst demonstrates (without talking about it) what in biblical language is called

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mercy.⁴¹ In his own unobtrusive way, but by great self-restraint and a keen reality sense, the psychoanalyst can be a charismatic figure par excellence. In his relations to this figure, the patient's freedom and unfreedom are put to a severe but honest test. In the course of it, he discovers freedoms where there were none before and bondages where none were surmised.

Thus in the psychoanalytic understanding of healing, the immutabilities of the past are transformed into the possibilities of the present. Note also the end of the therapeutic process. It is the point at which psychoanalysis pays perhaps most explicitly its respect to human freedom, highly regarding its dignity. At the time of discharge the patient is not preached at, nor steered or influenced in any particular direction chosen by others. He is just discharged, with the solemn trust that he has gained the freedom to use, for his own ends and by his own choices, all the resources of his community. "The parties part company. The contract has been fulfilled."⁴² I think this is practical existentialism at its best, the exercise of which is carefully safeguarded by the rules of psychoanalytic technique.

A RESPONSE TO DR. PRUYSER'S ARTICLE

MORTIMER OSTOW, M.D.

I'm afraid that my competence to discuss Dr. Pruyser's excellent essay is severely limited, since I am neither a philosopher nor a psychologist but a physician. The editors were doubtless aware of this limitation, and so it may be that they were interested in adding the medical point of view to this discussion. At any rate, I shall try to make a virtue of this necessity.

The physician is guided by only one criterion of success, the cure of disease. Aside from his obligation to relieve his patient of illness by every means at his command, he has, as physician, no other concern with philosophy or morality. The philosopher may challenge the thesis that it is good to cure under a given set of circumstances, and the moralist may question the desirability of curing an unworthy individual. But the physician has no choice. He must exert his best efforts in favor of every patient in his care.

Where therapy by means of drugs or surgery is involved, the physician is not expected to concern himself with such matters as essence, being or becoming. He is not expected to offer his patient freedom of the potentiality for transcendence,

⁴¹For an interesting ontological speculation about Soren Kierkegaard's concept, see: J. L. Halevi, "Kierkegaard's Teleological Suspension of the Ethical — Is it Jewish?" *Judaism*, 1958, 8:291-302.

⁴²K. A. Menninger, *Theory of Psychoanalytic Technique*. New York: Basic Books, 1958, p. 179.

except as these flow of themselves from the cure. Everyone recognizes that the patient might die of a ruptured gut or internal hemorrhage if the surgeon should hesitate to ponder and elicit the minutiae of the patient's subjective appreciation of his pain. In the treatment of mental illness, however, the physician is asked to investigate, elicit and describe in great detail the specific particulars and nuances of his patient's subjective perception of his distress. It seems to me that this special requirement turns upon a misconception of the nature of mental illness, of psychotherapy in general, and of psychoanalysis in particular.

"Mental illness" is ultimately the consequence of a disorder of the brain. It is as physically material and biologically determined as cardiac arrhythmia, epilepsy, cancer, or pneumonia. That the most apparent and destructive manifestations of the illness lie primarily in the realm of behavior, does not justify our assuming that it is the mind or soul *rather than* the body that is affected. If mind and soul appear to be disordered, such appearance is merely the consequence of dysfunction of the brain. We are learning even now to detect these disorders of chemistry in the organic substrate of the mind and to correct them chemically, or at least to balance them out.

In discovering the facts of psychogenesis, psychodynamics, psychic energetics, the instincts, the unconscious, defenses and sublimation, Freud did not negate the biologic nature of mental illness nor did he imply that it was different in nature from physical illness. What he did teach us is that in some instances a limited but not inconsiderable corrective influence could be exerted on neurotic individuals by psychologic intervention, that is, by means of carefully aimed remarks. To calculate the proper content and timing of these remarks, a highly specialized and rigorous technique was required and Freud was able, painfully and laboriously, to work out this technique. The devising of this technique permitted the elaboration of a theory. As in the case of every science, psychoanalytic technique and theory continued to exert a mutual, corrective influence upon each other and both have been constantly checked against clinical experiences. The psychoanalyst's concern with the details of the psychic life of his patient has the sole purpose of obtaining data which he must then process through his technique in order to determine his next move. The more clinical his attitude, that is, the more detached he is in his concern with signs and indications, the sharper and more effective will his therapeutic technique be. The more humanistic his approach, that is, the more personally involved he permits himself to become in his patient's suffering and subjectivity, the more blunted, diffuse and limp will his therapy be. A full and poignant description of the patient's unique affective experiences may interest the philosopher who is searching for clues to the nature of man and his grasp of reality, and it may interest the psychologist to the extent that it reveals something about the working of the human psyche. But the physician cannot afford the luxury of permitting himself to be distracted by these considerations lest disease and death carry off his subject before his pondering is complete.

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One may ask, of course, whether an expressed humanistic interest in the quality of a patient's suffering can have a therapeutic effect. Let me say first that such an effect remains to be demonstrated. It may be relevant to note that the reports of psychiatrists who attempt to apply an existentialist approach to the understanding of mental illness, say little about cure. *A priori* I should assume that in the case of certain types of patients, an interested, involved, warm expression of concern and affection will give the patient some relief from his suffering. In attempting to subdue the pathogenic conflict, many neurotic individuals abandon the object of their forbidden love and try to find solace in an unsatisfying narcissism. The attenuated, unspoken, well-controlled love relation that a therapist, using almost any technique, offers to such a patient, is often sufficient to give him some relief from his loneliness without at the same time arousing prohibited impulses too strongly. But, valuable as it may be for many suffering individuals, it can be regarded only as a palliative therapy. It may be compared to the offering of transfused blood to a patient with a bleeding peptic ulcer. It will cancel the immediate threat to life; in a few instances the relief it provides gives the patient time to allow the hemorrhage to stop spontaneously; but its chief advantage is that it strengthens the patient so that he will be able to tolerate the definitive treatment, namely surgical repair or resection. Similarly the nonspecific relief offered by a supportive type of psychotherapy can help a patient surmount a crisis, can carry him through a difficult period, but most important, it prepares him to tolerate and to accept a definitive psychotherapy. The only definitive psychotherapy which I know consists of bringing to the surface of consciousness the pathogenic struggles which seethe in the unconscious, that is, classical psychoanalysis. It may be of some interest to note here that the *modus operandi* of the newer psychically active drugs, tranquilizers and energizers, resembles the action of supportive psychotherapy rather than that of definitive psychotherapy. They alleviate the crisis and restore the patient's psychic life to its normal equilibrium position. They are powerless however to arrest the pathogenic tendency with any degree of permanence. Their influence is limited in time to the period when their concentration in the tissue fluids of the brain exceeds a threshold; it does not persist after the administration of the drug has stopped. They achieve their most elegant employment when they are used to prepare the patient for psychoanalysis and to sustain him during the protracted process.

Since psychoanalysis is a psychology, though it springs from the clinic, it has a legitimate interest in all of human endeavor. In many instances the psychoanalyst can relate individual pieces of human individual or group behavior to a general theory of behavior and thus establish relationships between one activity and another. Thereby he may at times be able to ascertain causes, or at least antecedents, and in some instances he can predict consequences. This kind of review of human behavior from the viewpoint of psychoanalytic psychology, may explain but it cannot evaluate in any moral sense.

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What, we may ask, are the implications for the psychoanalyst of an insistent interest in phenomenology and subjective reality? Pruyser points out Van der Waals' observation that Heidegger and Sartre postulate a direct unreflective knowing through mood and affect. The scrutiny of one's own responses to impinging stimuli is a form of self-observation. That form of self-observation that deals primarily with sensation arising within the ego, whether spontaneously or in response to somatic or external stimuli, has been called primary self-observation.⁴³ It is to be distinguished from an observation of one's externally visible characteristics. Now under what conditions is primary self-observation the dominant focus of ego function? The pathologic condition in which primary self-observation predominates is melancholia. In this condition consciousness is filled entirely with ego feelings. When the disease is pronounced the external world ceases to exist for the patient and all impressions, no matter what their origin, are considered to arise within the body. There is an amplification of all mood, affect and coenesthetic sensation and an attenuation of perception of external events. Metapsychologically we say that melancholia is characterized by an impoverishment of the ego, that is, depletion of the ego's libido supply.⁴⁴ I believe that primary self-observation prevails to the extent that the ego is depleted.⁴⁵ Slight ego depletion occurs not uncommonly in the mood fluctuations of everyday life and generally accompanies affective depression. The latter may come about as a result of a loss of love object, loss of self-esteem or physical illness. The precipitating agent may be a frustration, a disappointment or a threat. The painful experience and resultant depressive mood may be individual or group phenomena.

While occasional or recurrent self-observation is common, well within the limits of normal daily life, when it becomes a dominant concern, it raises a suspicion of frank pathology or at least of a consistent deviation from the usual equilibrium situation. In a letter to Marie Bonaparte Freud wrote: "The moment a man questions the meaning and value of life, he is sick, since objectively neither has any existence; by asking this question one is merely admitting to a store of unsatisfied libido to which something else must have happened, a kind of fermentation leading to sadness and depression."⁴⁶ Of course, merely entertaining such a thought is not pathologic, for we all do at moments of sadness or defeat, and it is a favorite sermon topic of clergymen. But when this emphasis upon inner sensation, inner reality, and life as awareness of existence are advocated as

⁴³Nunberg, H. *Principles of psychoanalysis*. New York: International University Press, 1955.

⁴⁴Freud, S. "Mourning and melancholia." In *Standard Edition*, 14. London: Hogarth, 1917e.

⁴⁵Ostow, M. "The psychic function of depression: A study in energetics." *Psychoanalytical Quarterly*, 29, (1960), 355-394.

⁴⁶Freud, E. L. (Ed.) *Letters of Sigmund Freud*. New York: Basic Books, 1960.

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a *modus vivendi*, we must suspect that the philosophy which does so is a sick philosophy which attempts to make living less painful by resorting to one of the techniques of illness. Now we have the answer to the question that Pruyser raises, namely, why do phenomenologic studies display "a general mood of somberness, hopelessness and bitter, ascetic heroism"? And why do the existentialists speak of the human "predicament" and not simply "situation"? The primary self-observation that phenomenology and existentialism recommend is characteristic of the state of ego impoverishment that depression tends to bring about and that itself created a mood of depression and pessimism.

Is there not a primary self-observation which takes note of joyous states? One would think so but, strange though it may seem, the analyst hears negative affects emerge from primary self-observation at least ten times as frequently as positive affects. This is not an artifact to be attributed to the illness of the patients who come under the analyst's scrutiny. The pronounced preference for negative over positive affects in self-observation prevails in everyday life, as everyone can confirm for himself. We think about how we are feeling mostly when we are feeling sad. When we are enjoying ourselves we seldom stop to take note of our pleasure. We observe good feeling primarily when we have been feeling bad and are improving, or where we apprehend subliminally that we are about to feel bad. When someone says, "It's a long time since I've had a headache," it is likely that a new headache has already begun to develop. Its first impact upon consciousness results in the creation of a denial. Similarly where it occurs to us on a plane ride that we have not become airsick, it is likely that the potentiality for nausea has already begun to develop and the nausea will shortly become conscious. People who see the world essentially as the source of inner experience are people whose egos are impoverished to a significant if not to a pathologic degree.

But the existentialists do not see themselves limited by this point of view. They regard it as a desirable position and advocate it. The cultivation of primary self-observation, as opposed to suffering it passively, represents an attempt to find gratification from it. The performance of ego functions gives rise to pleasure whether it be physical exercise, intellectual activity, or simply perception. These can be enjoyable as such even when their content is offensive or threatening. The existentialists like to show that a careful, thoughtful savoring of the sensations issuing from these ego activities can be gratifying in itself, and that this gratification is about as much satisfaction as a human can or should expect from life. The psychoanalyst would describe such a device as a narcissistic retreat, that is, an attempt to find pleasure in oneself without having to depend upon a capricious external reality.⁴⁷ The individual extracts from his own sensations pleasure which the world, or often his own inhibitions deny to him. It is one thing

⁴⁷Freud, S. *Civilization and its discontents* (Trans. by J. Riviere). London: Hogarth, 1929.

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knowingly to assess a situation and decide to make the best of it. When reality does deny almost all possibility for pleasure, as, for example, in the case of life in a concentration camp, it is reasonable to turn to inner sources of gratification for whatever relief they can offer. It is quite another thing, however, to claim that the subjective appreciation of phenomena constitute the only reality. To say that consciousness "constitutes the world" as Pruyser quotes Husserl, is a projection of delusional quality.

Light on this problem comes now from a surprising new source. I find that the recently developed drugs which are so helpful in the treatment of mental illness achieve their effects by influencing the amount and distribution of libidinal psychic energy in the ego; tranquilizers reduce it and energizers increase it. Since the prevalence of primary self-observation is an inverse function of ego libido content, it follows that we should be able to influence the former by using psychopharmaceutic agents to vary the latter. Experience confirms this conclusion quite convincingly. The melancholic who is preoccupied with inner sensation can, within a few weeks, be transformed into a manic or paranoiac who feels nothing arising internally, being fixed upon all external sensation. Conversely the manic or paranoiac can, within a similar period of time, be transmuted into an inward-directed brooder. Fairly broad fluctuations can occur also, well within the limits of normality. In other words, the psychoanalyst can now detect a whole range of ego states, normal and pathologic, each of which is characterized by a corresponding tendency toward primary self-observation. By virtue of what principle can we now select one of these states from among the others, one uncommon in normal life at that, and proclaim that it alone is the preferred condition toward which all men should strive?

This is, of course, merely the beginning of a discussion. It should be continued by undertaking a study of the circumstances under which this kind of narcissistic retreat from reality comes to involve a whole group rather than an individual. And what determines which of the many possible forms of culturally encouraged narcissism is selected by a given group at a given time? We should compare the group's response to a crisis of society with an individual's response to his personal crisis. More specifically, what is the crisis which encourages the preoccupation with these philosophies in several parts of the world at this time? But in these vital areas the physician, as such, has no competence and I shall have to discontinue my remarks at this point.

Books

Lebenswelt

WILLIAM A. BANNER

Human Freedom and Social Order. An Essay in Christian Philosophy by John Wild.
Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1959, 250 pages, \$5.00.

Professor John Wild's latest book, *Human Freedom and Social Order*, is a discussion of the meaning of Christian truth against the background of western philosophic tradition. What is offered is a formulation in philosophy in the development of certain ideas in Pascal and Kierkegaard, in which faith and reason stand in "living tension" with one another and in which the claims of each are not pressed beyond proper limits. In his argument Professor Wild defends Christian faith as an orientation in philosophy which is more significant for the understanding of the world than what is found in the abstract modes of objectivist thought. The result is a book which is both profound in insight and careful in analysis.

Professor Wild distinguishes faith as "a total response to certain historical events which call for a reorientation of the world toward God, and not any more around man." Christian faith resembles the myths of primitive societies, but it is distinguishable from such mythical forms as well as from the fragmentary myths of our history (the Nazi myth, the humanist-religious myth of Comte, etc.). The distinctive character of Christian faith (as opposed to the myths of primitive societies) is found in its dialectical tension with a man-centered world, its recognition of self-conscious individuality, its historicity, its provision for rational reflection, and its support of development and creative reconstruction. In its distinctive character Christianity is beyond myth and beyond gnostic thought. It is this character which is marked out by Professor Wild in his consideration of the history of Christian thought and in his discussion of Christian ethics and Christian social philosophy.

At the heart of Professor Wild's formulation of "a Christian philosophy" is the idea of the human *Lebenswelt*, the concrete world which has an existential order of its own and which "is neither exclusively objective, nor exclusively subjective, but both together in one." This idea has become, it is noted, a dominant theme of secular philosophy in Europe among those (Husserl, Heidegger, Jaspers, Sartre) who have followed certain hints in the Biblical literature.

The *Lebenswelt* is simply the existence of men as viewed subjectively from the inside. The most important of the structures of the *Lebenswelt*, as distinguished by Professor Wild, are self-conscious activity, global meaning, and

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transcendence. The *Lebenswelt* is relative to the individual who is always its center and who is a source of purposes and intentions. The *Lebenswelt* is characterized by the meanings which originate with the person, which are subject to some degree to individual choice and control, and which are directed to an ultimate value. All interpretations of the world are perspectival and limited. A perspective in which orders of meaning and value are seen cannot be examined (as an object) from the outside, and any perspective is to this extent subjective. The individual's world is ordered with respect to what he cares about.

The basic meanings which guide our existence are not however "enclosed within the mind." They are not private to the individual. These meanings are objective and pervade the whole human world which is always open to further meaning. Finally there is the "ultimate horizon of mystery" which encompasses the world of the free individual. All human worlds are thus seen as "only human views of the world and within the world that transcends them all."

Of the perspectives which may serve as a guiding image in an understanding of the world, Professor Wild defends the body of meaning and feeling which constitutes the Christian Revelation. This body has a unique structure of its own which may be accepted as a starting point for philosophy. Professor Wild maintains that there can be no philosophy without a starting point rooting in subjective concern. The Christian perspective offers a guiding image which is least affected by human limitations and which therefore avoids, at least in contrast to other perspectives, the errors of partiality, inaccuracy, and superficiality.

In the chapters on Christian ethics and Christian social philosophy, Professor Wild argues for the significance of meaning and value in giving guidance for concrete existence. He opposes the eudaimonism of western rationalism in its failure to allow for "essential growth and creativity." Christian ethics offers in contrast a basis for self-giving as well as self-getting in the freedom of the individual before transcendence.

In social ethics Professor Wild criticizes the natural law tradition for weaknesses common to all western rationalism and essentialism. He argues for a new understanding of the natural law in terms of basic social needs (as stated in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights) and in full recognition of the actual practice of freedom. This practice requires a world of its own with norms and structures which transcend the limits of social justice.

This book is an eloquent plea for perspective or orientation in philosophy as provided by Christian faith, a perspective which elicits an understanding of the world which is least qualified by human limitations. There is the rejection of the sharp distinction (in phenomenological criticism) between the attitudes of faith and the attitudes of reason. There is the recognition of commitment or concern which is not incompatible with respect for the objectivity of evidence but which is the source of meaning and value "in a human culture or in a single, individual world." The exaggerated claims of both faith and reason are rejected in apprecia-

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tion of a dialectical tension which necessarily obtains between commitment and rational criticism. While the attacks upon rationalism appear at times to be harsh, there is no endorsement of irrationalism or subjectivism. Professor Wild offers, in this book, a profound statement of Christian philosophy which is at the same time a new statement in philosophy itself.

A Face to Meet Faces

WILLIAM TURNER LEVY

The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot by Hugh Kenner. New York: McDowell, Obolensky. 1959, 346 pages, \$5.00.

A valuable book on T. S. Eliot's poetry would be a book that made us think freshly about familiar lines. Of explication there has been enough. At the time most of it appeared, it served the needed purpose of overcoming our impatience with the new; we imagined that all we needed in order to understand the poet was to have his sources and allusions chaptered and versed. (A school-boy reader of Milton today is thoughtfully provided with a text copiously foot-noted with a gloss to each reference to the world of Greece or of the Bible.) Eliot is no longer the unintelligible; he is the profound. Recognizing this, Mr. Kenner serves both his subject and us well. His book is informative in a new way. For example, biographical details which fix Eliot in time and place and activity in relation to what he was writing are revealing, particularly the little known facts about his early days as a critic and book reviewer. Mr. Kenner has marshalled and interpreted what he has found in a way that enables us to see the circumstances that helped evoke and shape the essays.

The title of this study indicates that the author is sprightly. He writes without stuffiness or condescension, a serious and witty man communicating the important results of his labors. What does he mean by calling Eliot an invisible poet? He is describing the anonymity that it has always been Eliot's choice to utilize in his verse: sometimes by the use of a mask, another time by the use of a style, by the words of another poet, finally by the creation of the music of the *Four Quartets*. The progressive achievement is magnificent, but not for its own sake. It liberated a voice that, without attracting any curiosity about itself, can speak without the limitations of personality. The mastery of this verse was required in order that a poem both great and original might come into being. The *Four Quartets* is one of the undoubted masterpieces in our language, and this book by Mr. Kenner helps us to follow the growth of Eliot's control over words.

I am indebted to the book for four areas of enlightenment. First, we are given an account of the influence of French verse on the young Eliot. Nothing in this

section is surprise, for since Edmund Wilson's essay in *Axel's Castle*, the debt to Laforgue and others has been annotated, but Kenner had made us see the influence as lively and necessary, and not, as it so often appeared in the past, mechanical. Second, the influence of the verse drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is nailed down as that facet of it which involves the "capacity for transfiguring the visible." A descriptive passage in Shakespeare exists in order to provide for the spectator in his own mind what is not on the stage before him to be seen. Eliot took his cue. In *Gerontion* this influence is to be seen at its height. Third, the importance to Eliot as poet of his being an American in England is treated briefly but with insight. Fourth, for the first time the influence of Bradley is assessed.

The twenty-nine-page chapter on the English philosopher Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924) is the most important contribution of this book. Bradley's work held Eliot's interest for more than a decade, beginning when the poet was in his late twenties, and his essay on Bradley is included in the *Selected Essays*. Is it possible to trace the precise areas in which Bradley influenced Eliot's sensibility? It might be risked. Quite possibly Eliot's "fatigue," the so-called "aged eagle" attitude, found not its origin but a justification for its existence in the resignation and/or despair of the philosopher. More importantly the tentative fashion in which Eliot presents an idea or even a conviction may derive from Bradley's entire approach. In Eliot this seeming hesitancy is valuable in offering a new concept to an unready public; it is also an ingratiating way of offering advice to those who ought to know more about their own subject than they do! Bradley may also have reinforced his sense that change must not be mistaken for progress and so, perhaps, may have brought him closer to understanding the true meaning and value of history. It is a subject (the past, a man's and a people's) of central importance in the poems.

In addition to these three points, Bradley may well have taught his young disciple to respect the complex and subtle nature of experience, for pondering the meaning of experience has never failed to evoke the full functioning of Eliot's philosophic and meditative cast of mind. Likewise, since the subject of time is one of Bradley's categories of reflection and since Eliot, as the author of a doctor's dissertation on Bradley, was entirely familiar with his opus, we may justly suppose that the young man nourished his fascination with time in his contact with the reflections of his master. Eliot's poetic contribution is unimaginable without a peculiarly American concern for the past and for that past which moves across an ocean and finds its roots. Not all are captive in an isolated present, and Eliot certainly sees the future as subject to shaping. It is also just possible that it was from pondering Bradley that Eliot conceived of the self as requiring identity, of being, in effect, a construction. Not a static construction, but one changing even momentarily and suffering the disappointment of recognizing the change to be unobserved by others. The poetry of the plays in particular has profited from this conception, although, of course, it was long before their birth that one had time to

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prepare a face to meet faces. Not only the "real" self is elusive, but also the real meaning of a poem — a matter a poet so badgered by explicators as Eliot must have considered often and often. Bradley's conception of objects and their reality adds further to our understanding of the way the world can be viewed by a poet conscious of the varieties of human experience and the way in which they partially create what they behold.

Not least significant among Eliot's debts is what he learned from Bradley's style. Eliot sensitively and ruthlessly assimilates what his art requires, and from Bradley, Kenner suggests that he learned to eschew eloquence. The final poetic style may owe more to the style of *Appearance and Reality* than has hitherto been suspected. The impersonal voice that arrives in its speech at no ultimate conclusion may well have suited a poet who is content to fare forward in each new work, to arrive only at "hints and guesses," and to indicate the *donnée* of Revelation as the natural unnatural fulfillment of such a human search.

One advantage of this study is that it covers all of Eliot's work as a poet. Not all of it is covered equally well: the plays are slighted in more ways than not being afforded sufficient space. But that would be to expect the perfect book on a subject. Hugh Kenner's is not that, but it is the best book since Helen Gardner's, and I can name no third to join their company.

The Integrity of Reality

JOHN W. DIXON, JR.

The Philosophy of Art History by Arnold Hauser. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959, 410 pages, \$7.50.

In the task — to which *The Christian Scholar* has so notably contributed — of formulating the significance of Christianity for the intelligence of our time, the conscientious Christian intellectual has one problem of peculiarly personal acuteness. He is faced with a massive, finely articulated, and developing intellectual life growing out of a seemingly secular experience. In his professional life he is a part of that structure. In his life as a Christian intellectual he must relate himself intelligibly to that structure.

So long as Christianity is considered a party, an ideology competing with other ideologies, this is a difficult task. The reception of Darwin and of Freud is a clear illustration of this, for they were seen, not as contributors to knowledge but as a threat to a fixed position.

The contemporary Christian scholar approaches his task somewhat differently. Painful memories of past foolishness encourages a different attitude, and this attitude is brought to completion by a different understanding of his faith.

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If he sees his faith as a structure of relationships and a posture toward reality, involving dogma as a consequence but not definable as dogma, then he is open to correction and to insights from apparently alien sources in a manner his grandfather rarely was.

As Mr. Hauser would be among the first to point out, scholarship is not immune from the ideological character of all thought. Yet it is possible to say that modern scholarship is among the finer instruments for responding to reality, attentive to the integrity of that reality. Thus the Christian is enabled to participate in the results of work that sought to free itself from party prejudices or to face openly the nature of the prejudices inalienable from the work. Then, too, by this means, the Christian scholar finds his own work corrigible and can offer his own correction to the work of his colleagues.

Mr. Hauser would certainly consider all this irrelevant to his concern or achievement. Yet his book is a notable contribution to his chosen field of scholarship and, with direct relevance, a notable contribution to the formation of an intelligence informed by Christian sensibility.

Art history is a newcomer to the disciplines and only within the past fifty years has it come to its full maturity. Mr. Hauser's book is not an epoch making book in the sense of opening a new epoch, of offering new concepts around which the next part of the development can take place. Yet in all its dependence on the work of the last three generations of art history, it is more than merely a summing up. It represents more nearly a distillation of the best work done or perhaps it would be better to say, a distillation of the inevitabilities of art historical scholarship. In this work the partisan battle lines are transcended; the exaggerations inevitable in the excitement of new discovery are brought into proper proportion and their insights into proper relation.

Despite the dogmatism of the title, Hauser has a healthy mistrust of the abstractions of philosophical systems, particularly when they try to order the human vitality of the arts in tidy rows of concepts. But a coherent — and usable — philosophy of art history emerges from the discussion. The problems as Hauser sees them are grouped in three categories: sociological, psychological, and stylistic. He carefully avoids treating them in isolation or serially. At most he shifts the center of gravity from one to another, but he never really loses sight of the essential fact that the art work is a product of the interaction of these, not mechanically (as most systems inevitably have it) but with the richness, variety and the unpredictability of life itself.

Hauser's major work, summed up in his monumental *The Social History of Art*, is in the area of the sociological relations of the art work, and his most consistent preoccupation in this book is with the sociology of art. He is a type of scholar, unfortunately rare, who sees criticism as discussion, and not impeachment. The book is in part a redressing of balances upset in the course of his

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enthusiasm in the earlier work. The consistent and justified criticism of *The Social History of Art* was of its tendency to a mechanical application of the dialectical theory. The same criticism might be made of the present work but now perhaps as a matter of taste in formulation rather than a matter of fundamental principle.

The substance of the book is contained in Chapters I, II, and IV. Chapter III, "The Psychological Approach: Psychoanalysis and Art," in Hauser's own words, is the work of "an enthusiastic, professionally uncommitted outsider." To a less enthusiastic and equally uncommitted reviewer it appears to be as solid and as useful an appraisal of the contribution of psychoanalysis to art as is currently available.

The final two chapters, on folk art and on originality and the conventions, are especially dear to the author as they more directly represent his positive contribution to understanding the present task of art in our culture. Yet they are dependent on the main argument and emerge as tributaries to it.

The first two chapters are a short but pithy introduction to the main themes. The main weight of the argument is carried in the fourth chapter which takes up nearly half the book. The title, "The Philosophical Implications of Art History: 'Art History without Names'," would be a better title for the book.

Hauser's basic principle is: "everything in history is the achievement of individuals; individuals always find themselves in a certain definite situation in time and place; their behavior is the product both of their inborn capacities and of the situation." All the discussion circles around this principle, weighing it, balancing all its qualifications. The individual is the center of history. All that is done or made is done or made by individuals. Yet the individual is in society and he inherits a stylistic structure. He is not fully determined, he is not fully free. He achieves what he can within the limits of what he must. If this sounds familiar to the Christian scholar, it might be understood as the work of fine mind grappling with a problem fundamental to a Christian intellectuality: the problem of creativity within the limits of human finiteness and fallibility.

The argument refers, as it must, most frequently to the founding fathers of modern art history, Wölfflin and Riegl, but such great figures as Dilthey and Dvorak get full attention and all the other major figures in the development of modern art scholarship are brought into the discussion. An interesting affinity of spirit shows up in the frequency with which the name of Focillon and quotations from *The Life of Forms* appear in summary passages. But where Focillon is allusive and poetic, Hauser is precise, direct. Not the least notable feature of the book is the clarity and simplicity with which it is written.

The argument is too balanced in its complexity to submit to a brief summary. But a few quotations may give its flavor.

"Art history is concerned in the main with trends and movements in the field of art; yet the only artistic reality is the work of art." "A nominalist type of logic

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is the only one that does justice to the aesthetic experience." (Thus he saves the individual from being crushed in the system.)

And yet, "Where there is no society there are no individuals . . ." (The Christian is inevitably intrigued by the analogy here to his doctrine of the Church) "An individually feeling, thinking, acting, producing, creative personality only emerges by reaction . . ." And in another place, "The resistance we meet wherever we come into contact with reality is one of the constitutive conditions of our spiritual life; . . ."

It is this principle that saves his "nominalism" from atomizing his object. Everything is the creation of the individual and the only artistic reality is the work of art, but these appear only as outcomes of the encounter with reality that creates the individual and, in turn, the work.

This is nowhere better seen than in his discussion of style. "Style is neither a genetic nor a teleological concept." Three generations of torrid and voluminous debate are summed up in that statement, yet it must be granted that Hauser makes his case. "It is rather a dynamic relational concept with continually varying content, so that it might almost be said to take on a new sense with each new work." "A style is no more than the result of many conscious and purposive achievements." Yet he does not fall into the nominalist trap and dismiss the concept of style as a noise. Style is recreated by each new artist but it is nonetheless a structure, a discernable reality, and as such is the fundamental tool of art history. The major intellectual effort in the building up of modern art history has gone into the elucidation of the concept of style, and the danger has been that style might be seen as having a life, a purpose, a reality of its own determining the work of the artist (the genetic concept) or directing his work toward a predetermined goal defined by the necessity of working out the problem stated in the structure of style (the teleological concept). Hauser works his way carefully through the forms of historicism represented by or derived from Wölfflin and Riegl. He does so respectfully, for these are the parents of modern art history, and their ideas are far from dead or for that matter killable. But the principal work, as Hauser sees it, is to rescue the individual from the compulsions of the historicist systems without extracting him from his place in the common enterprise or making him immune to the forces that play upon him. It is a delicate balance that is needed and Hauser does a splendid job of finding it.

In saving the sense of the individual he also saves the sense of the individual experience. At this point he takes on idealism and, in the eyes of this observer, wins easily. There is no pre-existing idea that is placed in the art work: ". . . the experience itself and not just the artistic form it ultimately takes, is molded by the available means of expression." Techniques and material are not limitations but constituent elements in the work of art. The Christian scholars who are increasingly looking to the doctrine of the incarnation as fundamental to a Christian attitude toward aesthetics could profitably look carefully at this section. When

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Hauser says "... we never find any human spiritual endeavor unless there is some tension with the material conditions of living," the Christian scholar, who has too often been preoccupied with something called the "spiritual," should use this as encouragement to enter his own heritage. It is not materialism, for the individual remains the creative force. But the individual does not live in a vacuum of spiritual values but in the substance and quality of earth itself. "... ideal factors may react upon material conditions," "The dialectical contest may actually end with the outward triumph of the ideal" yet there is no ideal as such but only the interaction of the psychology of the individual with the structure of his society and his heritage of forms.

These are not random samples obviously, for they are the skeleton of the argument. But in a rich and perceptive argument they are only parts. Hauser's discussion of the nature of our understanding of art, of validity, of necessity and freedom, of originality and convention have all the same perceptivity and clarity closely associated with a stress of the art work, never as one thing as the systems would have it, but as a part of the multifariousness of the human enterprise.

I detect only two weaknesses in the argument, neither of which detract seriously from the force of the book. He still tends to give too great force to the dependence of art on social forces by way of external compulsion. "The stimulus to a change in style always comes from without and is logically contingent." Elsewhere he describes this as a shift in the balance of social forces. This position is so well balanced throughout the book, with full weight on all the other elements of the art work, that it may not mean quite so much as it seems in the baldness of this one quotation. Yet he could perhaps have examined the causes for the shifts in society more closely. Hauser does not see social forces simply, nor does he see the relation between society and art simply. Yet there is the tendency to see the movement in one direction as much greater than the other. Perhaps the forces in society are more influenced by specifically aesthetic concepts than he allows. Hauser's critique of those who find the art work merely a reflection of or at best analogous to other forces, whether political, economic, philosophical, or theological, is elegant and forceful. But he still sees the interaction as slightly outside the center, as it were. There is still possibly the presence of an inner life in the spirit of man that might account for many of these outer developments and act as the force behind their mutual interaction.

The second point is perhaps rather intimately related to the first. That is his tendency to speak of form as "mere" play of line and tone. Again in most of the book there is enough attention to the integrity of form to suit all but the most extreme formalist. Yet the tendency is there. It would not be inconsistent with what he says elsewhere to see form as the locus of the work of the artist, and he could perhaps have strengthened his argument by a closer examination of the possibility of form, not only as expression but as communication and as carrier in itself of the experience that is at the basis of the creative act.

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The conclusion concerning the value of the book must be overwhelmingly favorable. It is an intelligent and literate distillation of the best thought that has gone into thinking about the arts.

It is unfair to a man to baptize his work against his will or intention but it is not out of the way to note the correspondences and analogies. Hauser approaches his problems with a kind of compassion for the intricacies and the terrors of the human enterprise. There is a singular grace of manner in his precise formulations of the relations that exist, seeking the character and force of each and the singular quality of their mutual relations. This seems to arise from the character of modern scholarship at its best: the ability to respond to the actualities of the material without imposing patterns on it.

The State of Learning Examined

ROLAND MUSHAT FRYE

The Academic Marketplace by Theodore Caplow and Reece J. McGee. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1958, 262 pages, \$4.95.

Constraint and Variety in American Education by David Riesman. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958, 174 pages, \$0.95.

Intellectuals are often unaware of the most restrictive limitations placed upon their intellectual endeavor, because these most restrictive limitations are inherent in the basic method which they accept as a part of their milieu. As the faults of individual men are often but the obverse sides of their virtues, so it may be equally true to say that limitation is but the obverse side of advantage in intellectual methods. Two recent books by well-known social scientists study the relevance of such issues to the twentieth-century university, and arrive at conclusions which are worthy of the thoughtful attention of all academic persons.

I

Professors Theodore Caplow and Reece J. McGee in their sociological study, *The Academic Marketplace*, point out that "the methods of social research have been applied by university professors to every important American institution except their own." Studying the problems of mobility within the national academic community, Professors Caplow and McGee arrive at some chilling conclusions. But as Jacques Barzun states in his foreword to their study, "since this book deals with the two fundamental concerns of academic men — their working conditions and their performance ex cathedra — it is likely that the last persons to hear about its existence will be the academic profession. For, as the

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authors of this study point out, the present customs and desires of that profession enforce upon its members a tradition of secrecy, ignorance, and self-deception, which, though neither deliberate nor perverse, is yet remarkable in a social group wedded to the forms of truth."

The Academic Marketplace describes an American academic community in which "the habit of insecurity and a certain mild paranoid resignation are standard psychological equipment." The authors do not find this to be a state of "creative insecurity" but rather one which is damaging both to individuals and to institutions. Their analysis of the situation in the nation's leading universities is indeed disquieting. "For most members of the profession," they write, "the real strain in the academic role arises from the fact that they are, in essence, paid to do one job, whereas the worth of their services is evaluated on the basis of how well they do another. . . . The vast majority are hired to teach, and . . . no specification of research duties is made. . . . When they are evaluated, however, either as candidates for a vacant position, or as candidates for promotion, the evaluation is made principally in terms of their research contributions to their disciplines." Or again, "It is neither an over-generalization nor an oversimplification to state that in the faculties of major universities in the United States today, the evaluation of performance is based almost exclusively on publication of scholarly books or articles in professional journals as evidence of research activity." Under such circumstances, conflicts both internal and external are inevitable, and we find that "a scholar's orientation to his institution is apt to disorient him to his discipline and to affect his professional prestige unfavorably. Conversely, an orientation to his discipline will disorient him to his institution. . ." As a result, "the alienation of the university faculty from undergraduate education proceeds apace," and there is an increasing "conventionalized contempt for the student." At the same time, despite the fact that overwhelming emphasis is placed upon publication, Professors Caplow and McGee report that "the data leave no doubt" that "publications are not generally read."

Caplow and McGee refer with much aptness to what they call "the empty rituals of research." "A great deal of foolish and unnecessary research is undertaken by men who bring to their investigations neither talent nor interest. The multiplication of specious or trivial research has some tendency to contaminate the academic atmosphere and to bring knowledge itself into disrepute." What else indeed could we expect?

II

This is not to say of course that research should be abandoned, and here a reviewer's digression may be in order. Research, in the broad and humane sense of reflection and investigation, undoubtedly provides sustenance for the

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life of learning. Uninterrupted contact with adolescent mentalities is likely to be more than a little deadening, while uninterrupted exercise in the grading of undergraduate (or even graduate!) papers is scarcely conducive to great intellectual vitality. A scholar *must* refresh his mind by study and by thought. Institutions which praise themselves as "teaching" colleges often debase the quality of their teaching by the quantity of it which they require. It is not unfair to say that most institutions which emphasize teaching rather than publication do in fact preclude the possibility of continuously excellent teaching by the exorbitant loads which they regard as normal for the faculty. Few men, even professors, can stay alive intellectually without ample time for uninterrupted study and thought. Those who impugn "research" often ignore this simple fact and thus invalidate their own arguments. Had Socrates himself been forced to live under a regime of heavy teaching loads (or even normal loads in many a reputable college) with excessive committee and conference appointments and with hundreds of papers to grade, he could hardly have produced a thought worth remembering for over two weeks. And had he been faced with the "publish or perish" choice, he would perhaps have chosen to drink the hemlock while still a young man!

It is difficult to imagine universities such as those which Caplow and McGee describe awarding tenure to Socrates or even promoting him to the rank of assistant professor. Plato would perhaps have made the grade, but his master could scarcely have done so under the conditions described in *The Academic Marketplace*. An important question is thus raised: Should the university force itself to choose between the "publications" of Plato and the "conversations" of Socrates? Surely the university should have room for both, for learning is advanced and communicated by both methods. But the university today, as we find it depicted in the excellent study by Caplow and McGee, appears to be as much involved in the encouragement of trivia as in the significant pursuit of truth. Surely the university is correct in insisting that its faculties all spend time in study and reflection, but is the university also wise in insisting that its faculties all be judged by the black-and-white results of publications which are, even so, rarely read? Most scholars who are now producing significant materials would continue to do so, if they were given the time for research, even though they were not forced into publication. At the same time those who now feel themselves compelled to write would be relieved of the somewhat degrading need to blow up balloons at the academic fair. By focusing attention so sanely upon these problems, Caplow and McGee have rendered a great service to the academic community.

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III

David Riesman in his *Constraint and Variety in American Education* reinforces with his personal observations the results found by the sociological investigations of Caplow and McGee. (Riesman is concerned with many aspects of education which are outside the interest of this particular review article. At many such points he speaks with great wisdom and at certain others with less. Thus for example whenever he approaches the subject of theology in general or of church-related education in particular his thinking seems to revert to clichés.) Riesman clearly indicates the contemporary urgency of the problem with which this essay was opened — the problem of the fashion in which a system of thought tends, in advancing its own valid ends, to militate against the pursuit of other valid ends. Riesman holds that the increasing specialization and departmentalization of knowledge in our time tends both to stimulate the search for new knowledge and to erect barriers against that search. Specialization is thus seen as having an advantageous effect in universalizing a student's viewpoint (that is, in releasing him from provincialism of loyalty to his own intellectual hamlet and enfranchising him into the "new" world of medieval studies, for example), while at the same time it gives him a sort of academic vested interest. "Anyone who thinks that vested interests are all economic knows nothing of the intellectual life," Riesman writes; "investments in ideas, whether in the form of ideologies or of disciplines, involve what we have made of ourselves. . . ."

The ill results are many. "Especially in the minds of timid students," Riesman writes, "the existing array of departments has a kind of Kantian *a priori* effect on the students' categories: they are the pre-coded forms of knowledge, and it is hard to learn to think in other codes. . . . Thus each discipline is at the same time an institutionalization of the search for new knowledge and a barrier to that search." Riesman regards the results as unfortunate both on the undergraduate and the graduate levels: "Graduate school for many begins a training in constraint and constriction — so much so that too often I have seen undergraduate students whom I knew as bold and bright become scared and unimaginative — sometimes actually rather stupid — as they went on in graduate work. The disciplines at the graduate level often turn out to be new parishes with impalpable and amorphous — hence anxiety-producing — boundaries; these protect one at once against old prejudices and new facts. Scholars who enter a field because of what it can do for them in career terms (rather than because of what they can do for it) often end up as members of intellectual blocs — gatekeepers insisting on tolls being paid to their fields and their preferred factors from any intellectual traffic."

The question, as raised by Riesman and by Caplow and McGee, is as to whether much of modern higher education represents but a newer form of an

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older pedantry and scholasticism. It is a question with which we must struggle in all seriousness and intellectual honesty. The unexamined life is as unrewarding and even dangerous for an institution and a profession as it is for an individual.

To Open the Conversation

JOHN C. BENNETT

The Riddle of Roman Catholicism by Jaroslav Pelikan. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959, 272 pages, \$4.00.

Professor Pelikan's book, *The Riddle of Roman Catholicism*, is markedly different from most of the current discussions of Roman Catholicism. He has little to say about the Catholic problem in the context of politics and Church-State relations. He deals wholly with Roman Catholicism as a form of the Christian religion which needs to be understood religiously and theologically from inside before it is criticized. His book is a remarkable achievement in view of the kind of acceptance it has received. Himself a Missouri Synod Lutheran — though one who breaks the pattern, as seen in the fact that he asks Protestants to take Schleiermacher seriously again (p. 229) — he has written a book about Roman Catholicism that has won the praise of Roman Catholics and has been awarded a generous prize by the Methodists. Father Weigel has written a discriminating and, on the whole, appreciative review in *America* (Sept. 12, 1959). Professor Pelikan as a highly competent historian of theology is admirably equipped as a scholar to do this unusual job. He has also been fortunate in having close relations with scholarly and open-minded Roman Catholics who have helped him to see the aspects of Roman Catholicism which are quite different from the Protestant stereotype of their Church. He does not allow his irenic spirit to obscure differences or to muffle his own statement of the Protestant position, for it is his basic criticism of Roman Catholicism that it has never really listened to the witness of the Reformation.

Most of the chapters are brief, clear, and sympathetic expositions of Roman Catholic church's doctrine, of its practice, of its view of culture and of the state, of Thomism as the official philosophy and of marginal tendencies to deviate from it, of Catholic piety, and of the Catholic attitude toward other forms of Christianity. Each chapter is a model of concise statement, but I do feel that the book could be a third again as long without being less useful for the readers for whom it was written. The author has tried to present Roman Catholicism as almost a live option for Protestants. He emphasizes its positive advantages in the present cultural situation because, in contrast to Protestantism, it has a "comprehensive world view," an inclusive appeal to all classes of men, a capacity

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to deal with the problems of the city which Protestantism tends to desert, a living tradition which has a definite structure and location, and sacramental worship which Protestants have in considerable measure lost. Throughout this exposition one senses the two deep sources of attraction in Catholicism which are also the sources of its unavailability for non-Catholics: its provision of an absolute authority in matters of truth and its offer of a sure and tangible mediation of grace.

Professor Pelikan is at many points sharp enough in his criticism of Roman Catholicism, of the tendency of its sacraments to degenerate into magic, of its Mariolatry, of its exaggeration of obedience, of its legalism, of its difficulty in building bridges to modern culture, of its arbitrary ecclesiastical extensions of the content of natural law, of the claim to infallibility in the precise sense and of the much broader aura of infallibility and holiness that make it difficult for the Roman Church to be self-critical. He says that a Protestant cannot become a Catholic without unconditional surrender of what is essential in his Protestantism (p. 211). In outlining the convictions which the Protestant must give up if he becomes a Catholic he expresses the Protestant's fundamental criticism of Catholicism. It is all there, and yet I come away from the book with the feeling that Professor Pelikan does not emphasize sufficiently the point that infallible claims constitute a barrier in principle between Roman Catholicism and Protestants that no dialogue and no negotiations and no living together with religious sympathy can be expected to overcome. I am sure that Professor Pelikan feels this difficulty fully but the book does not allow it to stand out clearly enough. A vast amount of what may seem unchangeable can be changed because it is a matter of human rather than divine law. But how can one expect reversals in the accumulation of dogmatic pronouncements? Has not the Roman Church taken on so much baggage since the Reformation that it cannot really listen to the Reformation? So long as the principle of infallibility is there, how can the Church avoid demanding an obedience that the human mind has no right to offer in regard to future declarations of truth that claim to be divine?

Professor Pelikan's program, which does not ignore these difficulties, is based upon the assumption that Protestants and Catholics do have a common faith and loyalty and that the area of differences could be narrowed if there were deeper contacts and conversations between them. He believes that they must take each other seriously religiously, and he proposes that institutes be set up where there can be continuous exchanges between them. This is already a reality in Europe, but in this country, when Catholics and Protestants have discussions, they seldom get beyond such issues as birth control and parochial schools.

If there is one factor in the situation which Professor Pelikan describes that

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is more hopeful than any other, it is the kind of impact that the Bible is now having on Roman Catholicism, on its scholarship, and on much of its thought and piety. The authorities seem to be allowing the Biblical scholars to break the rules and to have a freedom that goes beyond the official doctrine (pp. 191-194), and the laity are encouraged to read the Bible. There are authoritarian limits here of course, but there are also unprecedented possibilities.

Professor Pelikan has written the best book by a Protestant to interpret Roman Catholicism to Protestants, and on many a campus it should be used, not only to promote the academic study of Catholicism but also to start a theological conversation between Protestants and Catholics.

Threshold Phenomena in Evolutions and Involutions

HAROLD K. SCHILLING

The Phenomenon of Man by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, with Introduction by Sir Julian Huxley. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959, 318 pages, \$5.00.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, His Thought by Claude Tresmontant, with Introduction by Gustave Weigel, S.J. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1959, 128 pages, \$3.00.

That *The Phenomenon of Man* is a remarkable book has been attested by so many competent readers that it may be taken for granted. What seems especially noteworthy however is the evident enthusiasm of its reception by people with basically different understandings, beliefs, and faiths — witness the scintillating, multi-hued galaxy of names appearing on the dust cover — all of whom have said very complimentary things about it: Julian Huxley, Arnold Toynbee, F. S. C. Northrop, James Collins, Loren Eiseley, Romain Gary, Roy Chapman Andrews, Abraham Heschel, William G. Pollard, Michael Polanyi, André Rousseau.

The book has been acclaimed as an attempt to relate science and religion meaningfully. The fact is however that the author has reiterated consistently that he has written neither as religious apologist nor as synthesizing philosopher but as naturalist and scientist. He disavows any desire to "explain" metaphysically. He wants his book to be judged simply as a scientific study of phenomena he has "seen," and what he means by "seeing" is set forth cogently in the foreword. He has looked not only for bare "facts" but for perspectives and patterns of sequence and coherence. What he has seen is a vast all-inclusive ongoing cosmic process which involves all observable phenomena — material, biological, psychological, sociological, and religious — which, he feels, must be described not only in terms of origins and antecedents, but also of directions and trends; not only of "causal" sequence pushing from behind but final end pulling

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from ahead. His aim is not to picture the past and future as they "really" were or will be but as they "must appear to an observer standing on the advanced peak where evolution has placed us" and "looking" both backward and forward by extrapolating from the present.

From this "advanced" lookout he has been able to discern that the cosmic process involves the interior as well as the exterior of things, spiritual as well as physical energy, the personal and "hyperpersonal" as well as the impersonal. In many respects therefore Father Teilhard reminds one of such seers as Bergson, Weizsacker, and Sinnott whose vision has also extended beyond the horizons of traditional evolutionary science and philosophy. What seems to be original with him however is his identification and elaboration of a process complementary to that of evolution, namely that of "*organic involution*," to which he ascribes the emergence and development of the human psyche. Says he: "If the universe regarded sidereally, is in process of spatial expansion (from the infinitesimal to the immense), in the same way and still more clearly it presents itself to us, physico-chemically, as in process of organic involution upon itself (from the extremely simple to the extremely complex) — and moreover this particular involution 'of complexity' is experimentally bound up with a correlative increase of interiorization, that is to say in the psyche and consciousness." This process, he asserts, is as evident as any thus far recognized by science. To explain it (scientifically, not metaphysically), he hypothesizes "the existence in rudimentary form of some sort of psyche in every corpuscle, even in those whose complexity is of such low or modest order as to render it [the psyche] imperceptible." All evolutions and involutions were therefore potentially existent in the primordial stuff at the "beginning" (which he refers to as the alpha point).

The evolution-involution process has not been a consistently continuous one. There have been several geneses or emergences (e.g. geo-, bio-, psycho-genesis) that were discontinuities in the curve of development. In thinking of emergences Father Teilhard employs the powerful concept of "threshold" or "change of state" phenomena, familiar to us in physics and chemistry, and for this also he claims originality. Each such change of state is then followed by a gradual "steady state" development. To illustrate, the emergence of man is interpreted as the transition under certain critical conditions to a new state of matter, "nothing less than a new form of biological existence." It is truly new because it has properties not characterizing earlier states or forms, namely the power of reflection and of deliberate invention in order to circumvent the mere play of chance. This emergence was followed by the gradual steady state process of hominization, by which man has become more and more human.

The history of the appearance and subsequent development of the various states, e.g. matter, life, mind, have been depicted in great detail. Among the several emergences, that of man constitutes a turning point in "natural history."

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Until then expanding, diverging evolution dominated the situation on Earth. Thereafter converging involution became dominant — in the process of hominization. It is a turning point also because here for the first time evolution became, so to speak, self-conscious, aware of itself. There appeared a being with the desire and ability (within limits) to guide or "control" evolution for purposes of self-perpetuation.

Father Teilhard feels also that at this stage it becomes clear what the direction — or purpose — of evolution has been. It is in the direction of increasing cephalization and hominization. If this is so we should be able to predict, at least to some degree of approximation, what future developments will probably be. To be specific, he feels that biological evolution has not come to a halt or "reached its ceiling," as is commonly thought, but is making a great "leap forward." What he expects is that the further operation of convergent interiorization and involution, the trend from the simple toward the complex and toward increasing consciousness, will culminate in genuine socialization of humanity, the development of the whole human species, with collective properties and abilities in reflection, invention, and social self-determination and perpetuation. Everywhere about us our author sees evidence of "the establishment now proceeding through science and the philosophies of a collective human *Weltanschauung* in which every one of us co-operates and participates, . . . the first symptoms of an aggregation of a still higher order. . . ." In this development some of the significant factors will be collective group research, ideological and emotional cohesion (love), and the conjunction or conjugation of science and religion.

Finally all this seems to Father Teilhard to constitute "serious scientific proof" that "the zoological group of mankind — far from drifting biologically, under the influence of exaggerated individualism, towards a state of growing granulation . . . is turning . . . by involution upon itself of the stuff of the universe . . . toward that transcendent focus we call Omega."

Here we encounter difficulty. The picture has been clear thus far despite much unconventional thinking. Evolution-involution has been represented as proceeding like a train of waves from one pole of a sphere to the other, first mainly by external divergence from a beginning, and later mainly by internal convergence toward some ultimate "end." Here the story becomes blurred and for me almost meaningless. The pole or focus of converging hominization, Omega, seems to be regarded as both a *future final state*, in which "time and space become truly humanized — or rather superhumanized" in an "association of an Ego with what is All," and a *present reality*, "a supremely autonomous focus of union," the "*source of love and object of love at the summit of the world above our heads.*" There "mankind, *taken as a whole*, will be obliged . . . to abandon its organo-planetary foothold so as to pivot itself on the transcendent

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centre of its increasing concentration. This will be the end and the fulfillment of the spirit of the earth." Apparently the material component of existence will disappear and only the spiritual remain — the exact opposite of the situation at the beginning.

Now how is this work to be evaluated as a scientific treatise? Certainly much of it represents science at its best. After all Father Teilhard was a very distinguished scientist. On the other hand many scientists would also say that much of it is extra-scientific, e.g. the preoccupation with the psyche and the use of such concepts as interiorization, hominization, personalization. It is a fact however that the term "science" is being used more and more broadly today. Scientists of unimpeachable reputation are enlarging its meaning by extending their "scientific concerns" and applying scientific method and thought in many other fields, as evidenced by the recent Darwin centennial celebration at Chicago. In this sense the book, taken as a whole, must in my opinion be regarded as thoroughly scientific. It is only when we come to Omega, that I would balk at so designating it.

The Teilhard delineation of the phenomenon of man, though "scientific," has a major deficiency. It virtually disregards the tragic aspect of human existence. Not until the very end of the book is evil mentioned, and a brief treatment of it is relegated to an appendix. The reason given for this is that "the aim of the book was limited to bringing out the positive essence of the biological process of hominization." But doesn't this unduly limit our conception of that process? Is it clear that its "essence" is positive?

Employing Father Teilhard's method of "seeing," I suggest that from the actualities of the history of mankind it is apparent that in man there emerged a being with paradoxical potentials, namely for constructive good *and* for destructive evil. Man is individually and collectively capable of thoughts and acts of both altruism *and* diabolical savagery that far transcend anything witnessed among animals. Moreover not only may man be at home in the universe and be aware of the ground of his being, but he can be estranged from them, as alien or even rebel. No insight has found expression more persistently in the literatures of the world than this of the paradoxical aspects of man's existence and of his nature. While it is a fact of course that our poets, novelists, and religious prophets have seen this much more clearly than have our scientists *qua* scientists, surely no portrayal of man that glosses over these facts is completely "scientific."

This kind of inadequacy is especially unfortunate when the attempt is made to look ahead by extrapolation in terms of tendencies now apparent. Suppose we allow the author's claim that the direction of evolution-involution is indicated by that of hominization, i.e., "toward the more and more truly human." What direction is this? I suggest that a rigorously scientific look at the data now available will show that we are not yet in a position to conclude definitely whether

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the direction is toward the good or the bad. Therefore there exists no adequate basis for extrapolation, and all prediction of the future becomes exceedingly hazardous, perhaps even unjustifiable. Father Teilhard must have recognized this, for there is tucked away near the end of the book a lone sentence which suggests that "Obeying a law from which nothing in the past has ever been exempt, evil may go on growing alongside good, and it too may attain its paroxysm at the end in some specifically new form." It would seem that Father Teilhard and others who now cast the die and choose the vector toward an end of good rather than that toward evil make this choice on the basis of extra-scientific considerations, perhaps of religious faith.

Another important facet of the uniqueness of man that has received scant attention in this book is his being a worshiping and mythmaking creature, one who is sensitive and responsive to the holy and consequently has developed concepts of divinity that profoundly affect his motivations, actions, and interpersonal relations. Thus the astounding phenomenon of the religions of the world is hardly mentioned, though the particular "Christian phenomenon" is — in an epilogue.

The Tresmontant book is an able, perceptive study, providing an over-all view and critique of Father Teilhard's work and thought in general. It provides therefore a valuable background and context for a fuller understanding of his opus magnum, *The Phenomenon of Man*. Part one surveys his "Vision of the World," and part two presents "Teilhard, Christian Thinker." There is a glossary of terms and a comprehensive bibliography. The writings of Teilhard himself are listed chronologically and thus reveal an interesting evolution of his thought. The picture of Teilhard that emerges from this study is that of a great and good man, an original and courageous thinker, a rigorous scientist, a philosopher, poet and mystic, as well as a man of God of genuine piety and religious sensitivity, but one relatively uninformed in theology. By way of summarizing his work, Tresmontant asserts that "Teilhard's entire scientific work can be characterized as an effort to read the direction of evolution in reality itself, without recourse to any metaphysical presupposition, in order to elucidate its immanent intentionality in the very order of phenomena, and using the scientific method alone." "This discovery of the universe forced Teilhard to rethink his Christianity. As a result he was able to develop, at the same time, a positive scientific knowledge of the world and an understanding of the mystery of Christ." Finally, "the spirit which animates Teilhard's work is the love of the living Christ for whom all creation sighs, and in whom it will find its fulfillment and consistency." "Teilhard knew how to make his science contribute to his love and adoration."

I do not find it difficult to understand why when *Le Phénomène Humain* was published in France it was widely regarded as "one of the outstanding publishing events of the century." It is beautifully written — though the number of newly

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coined words is sometimes disconcerting. It offers a breathtaking view and a magnificent synthesis. Somehow it speaks to the mind and the heart. It is vibrant with compelling faith that this is a universe not merely of chance and probability but of meaningful purpose. I suspect that whatever may be the prospective reader's theology, Christian or otherwise, here he would feel himself being ushered into the presence of the Ultimate.

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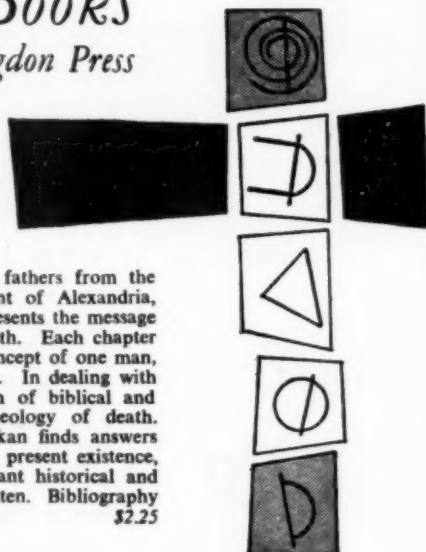
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